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SUPPORT SERVICES AND STATE STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENTS FOR
HOMELESS AND HIGH MOBILITY YOUTH: A MIXED METHODS CASE STUDY

by

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A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major: Educational Studies

(Educational Leadership and Higher Education)

Under the Supervision of Professor Marilyn L. Grady

Lincoln, Nebraska

May, 2023

SUPPORT SERVICES AND STATE STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENTS FOR
HOMELESS AND HIGH MOBILITY YOUTH: A MIXED METHODS CASE STUDY

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University of Nebraska, 2023

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For the past decade, the number of homeless youth in the United States has drastically increased, with public schools now consistently serving over one million homeless students each year. Research spanning three decades has linked youth homelessness and poorer academic achievement. In addition to decreased academic achievement, homeless and highly mobile (HHM) youth are more likely to suffer from mental health issues, have a behavioral diagnosis, engage in high-risk behavior, be truant, abuse drugs and alcohol, and even face premature death. Because homelessness is also frequently misidentified as solely an urban problem, it often results in HHM youth being left underserved in many small, rural communities across the nation.

The purpose of the present explanatory sequential mixed methods case study was twofold: (1) to determine whether access to support services impacted achievement on English Language Arts, Mathematics, and ACT state standardized assessments for HHM students in three PreK-12 public school districts in the Midwest from 2016 through 2022, and (2) to address issues of social justice and equity by developing action plans with each district to institute systemic change by increasing support services for HHM students to improve performance on state standardized assessments.

The present study found that performance on state standardized assessments for HHM student populations varied greatly longitudinally and across the three districts, and

that HHM student rates increased substantially in two out of the three districts post the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, it was found that all three districts provided a wide variety of support services for their HHM students, with the districts in rural locales providing a larger proportion of services compared to the suburban district. Implications and recommendations for future research were provided.

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You know, whatever you got to do to make it work. That's how we do it. We're trying to do the best we can for kids.

—Mr. Bronx¹

¹ A pseudonym

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Homeless youth are generally defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (MVA, 2015) as individuals 21 years of age and younger who “[lack] a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence” (p.23). According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) 2020 Point-in-Time count, total homelessness in the United States increased for the fourth consecutive year, with nearly 18% of all individuals experiencing homelessness in January 2020 being under the age of 18, while another 8% were young adults between the ages of 18 to 24 (Henry et al., 2021). In 2020, about 171,575 people in families with children experienced homelessness on a single night across the United States, with about 34,000 people under the age of 25 experiencing homelessness on their own as “unaccompanied youth” (Henry et al., 2021, p.1). Not only did the number of homeless youth reported by public schools drastically increase by 90% from 680,000 in 2008 to roughly 1.3 million just five short years later, but since 2011, public schools have reportedly served more than one million homeless students each year (U.S. Department of Education [ED], 2020). By the 2018-19 academic year, the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE, 2021) reported the number of homeless children enrolled in public schools had increased by 800 thousand, to 1.38 million. Despite these alarming numbers, many researchers believe the statistics on youth homelessness to be extremely underreported, and the actual number of homeless children in the U.S. could be upwards of 2.5 million (Hallett et al., 2015).

It is a common misconception that homelessness in America is largely limited to urban and metropolitan geographical areas (Canfield, 2014), when in fact, between 2019 and 2020, homelessness increased across all geographic categories with the number of

individuals experiencing homelessness increasing by three percent in major cities and two percent in largely suburban and rural areas (Henry et al., 2021). Although nearly 6 in 10 people experiencing homelessness did so in an urban area in 2020, with more than half of all unsheltered people residing in the nation's 50 largest cities, 20% of homeless individuals still resided in largely rural areas (Henry et al., 2021). Homeless individuals are often found in higher numbers in urban areas because larger cities typically have more resources and are able to provide a wider range of public goods and support services when compared to rural areas and small towns (Mullins et al., 2016). Alternatively, rural youth often remain "hidden" in their communities because they are more likely to be couch surfing or sleeping in either vehicles or the outdoors (Morton et al., 2018a).

Research on homeless youth indicates that youth experiencing homelessness are at an increased risk for exposure to serious physical and mental health issues, victimization, substance abuse issues, and even premature death in some cases (Anthony & Fischer, 2016; Auerswald et al., 2016; Cutuli, 2018). Studies have also found that homeless and highly mobile (HHM) youth typically underperform academically in school when compared to their more advantaged and stable-housed peers, including those in extreme poverty but not homeless, because this subgroup of students typically faces increased risk and more barriers to academic success (Cutuli et al., 2013; NCHE, 2021; Obradović et al., 2009). Data from the NCHE (2021) for the 2018-19 school year, demonstrated that only 30% of homeless students were proficient in reading/ language arts, only 25% achieved proficiency in mathematics, and 28% were proficient in science. Furthermore, homeless students scored 8 to 9 percentage points lower than economically

disadvantaged, but not homeless students, on statewide assessments for the 2018-19 school year. Based on data from all states for SY 2018-19, statistics indicated that four-year graduation rates for the homeless student subgroup ranged anywhere from 49% to 86% between states (NCHE, 2021). It is often the case that HHM youth experience additional traumatic or highly stressful situations and consequently, have higher rates of victimization, are at risk of suffering from mental health issues, have a behavioral diagnosis, engage in high-risk behavior, face problems at school, and abuse drugs and alcohol (Cutuli, 2018; Cutuli et al., 2013). Much of the research on youth homelessness suggests that homelessness represents a risk for decreased academic achievement beyond poverty (Cutuli et al., 2013; Howland et al., 2017; Obradović et al., 2009). However, although there are evident achievement gaps between HHM students' performance and that of their peers, studies such as Obradović et al. (2009) have also demonstrated instances of striking variability within the subpopulation of HHM students; indicating not only heterogeneity among students identified as HHM, but also instances of academic resilience.

From 2019 to 2020, the number of total people experiencing homelessness nationwide across the United States increased by approximately 12,751 individuals, or 2%, indicating the fourth consecutive year of increases (Henry et al., 2021). When looking at youth alone, the trends on youth homelessness have mirrored national trends, with the NCHE (2021) estimating that in 2018, of the approximately 51 million children enrolled in local education agencies across the United States, 2.71% (or 1.38 million) of those students were homeless. These figures continue a trend of more than ten reporting years since the 2006-07 school year (SY) that indicate homeless student enrollment has

generally increased every year with the exception of the 2017-18 SY when homeless student enrollment decreased by 8% (NCHE, 2021). From the 2016-17 SY through the 2018-19 SY, 14 states experienced growth of 10% or more in their homeless student populations while only nine states saw an equally large decrease in their homeless student population (NCHE, 2021).

Despite these troubling nationwide trends, homelessness in America is often perceived as largely an urban issue and relatively non-existent in rural areas. Although the vast majority of homeless individuals reside in urban or metropolitan areas (60%), a sizable, and notable, proportion of individuals experiencing homelessness often remain “hidden” in rural communities (Henry et al., 2021). This is a common misconception of homelessness that can have detrimental consequences for those left homeless in rural areas without access to essential services.

Although youth homelessness presents increased risk such as mental and physical health problems, behavioral problems, higher rates of victimization and substance abuse, as well as increased risk for premature death during childhood and adolescence (Auerswald et al., 2016; Cutuli, 2018) other studies such as Cutuli et al. (2017) and Montgomery et al. (2013) have also noted the positive correlation between higher levels of childhood adversity and subsequent risk for adult homelessness, which later contribute to the intergenerational transmission of risk from those adults to their children. Schools have the capability to play a critical role in the lives of HHM students because they are able to provide or coordinate various services at little or no cost that otherwise may be inaccessible to this vulnerable population of students. Often, these services include but are not limited to medical, dental, mental health, housing, transportation, clothing, food,

and academic services. In recent years, it has become an issue of growing concern that schools serving rural HHM youth have limited and inequitable access to support services and resources that are otherwise available in urban areas and larger cities. Homeless liaisons across all locales are tasked with providing access to essential resources and services urgently required by HHM students through a coordinated approach utilizing services both within the school/district as well as out in the community. It is imperative that schools continue to develop new ways to provide HHM students with access to free or low-cost resources and basic support services that they desperately need in order to combat the detrimental effects of homelessness on America's youth.

Purpose of Present Study

The purpose of the present explanatory sequential mixed methods case study was twofold: (1) to determine whether access to support services impacted achievement on English Language Arts, Mathematics, and ACT state standardized assessments for HHM students in three PreK-12 public school districts in the Midwest from August 1, 2016 through May 31, 2022, and (2) to address issues of social justice and equity by developing action plans with each district to institute systemic change by increasing support services for HHM students to improve performance on state standardized assessments. To date, very few studies were identified that utilized mixed methods approaches to studying HHM student performance on state standardized assessments. The present study addresses the scarcity of research regarding HHM students' access to support services and impacts on resulting academic performance on state standardized assessments particularly for those in rural areas, while also addressing the paucity of literature regarding Native American HHM student performance in rural districts.

Collectively, this study utilized HHM student state standardized assessment data, semi-structured interviews with homeless education liaisons, in addition to surveys of district and community support services from three very distinctive districts in the Midwest to determine whether the quantity of support services available to HHM students both within the school/district as well as in the larger community impacted their performance on state standardized assessments administered between August 1, 2016 and May 31, 2022.

Summary of Research Questions

The present study was guided by seven overall aims corresponding to eight total research questions: two quantitative research questions, three qualitative research questions, and three mixed methods research questions, directing data collection, analysis, interpretation, and integration.

Quantitative Research Questions

The two aims of the quantitative strand were as follows: (a) to describe HHM rates and student performance on state standardized assessments over time, and (b) to compare HHM student performance on state standardized assessments across the three districts.

1. How has the HHM rate changed in each district from August 1, 2016 through May 31, 2022, and how does that compare across districts?
2. How did HHM students perform on English Language Arts, Mathematics, and ACT state standardized assessments across all three districts between August 1, 2016 through May 31, 2022?

Qualitative Research Questions

The two aims of the qualitative strand were as follows: (a) to understand how definitions of key terms for *homeless* and *highly mobile* inform eligibility for and access to support services for HHM students, and (b) to understand the role of homeless education liaisons in providing and coordinating support services for HHM students both within schools/districts as well as in the community.

1. How does each district define *homeless* and *highly mobile*?
2. How do each district's definitions inform eligibility for and access to support services for HHM students?
3. What is the role of homeless education liaisons when providing and coordinating support services for HHM students?

Mixed Methods Research Questions

The three aims of the mixed methods research questions were as follows: (a) to provide empirical evidence regarding the impact of access to support services on HHM student performance on state standardized assessments, (b) to compare the availability of support services and HHM student performance across the three districts, and (c) to develop action plans for each district to improve access to support services and performance on state standardized assessments for HHM students.

1. How do the three districts compare in the types and quantities of services they are able to provide to their HHM students?
2. How does having access to support services both within the school/district and in the community impact HHM student performance on English Language Arts, Mathematics, and ACT state standardized assessments?

3. How can the data gathered from HHM student state standardized assessments, faculty interviews, and surveys of district and community support services be utilized to design individualized action plans for each district in order to improve access to support services and performance on state standardized assessments for HHM students?

Contributions of Present Study

As a result of the extensive body of research documenting the benefits of support services on outcomes for homeless youth, scholars and practitioners may benefit from understanding how access to support services can not only improve HHM student performance on state standardized assessments, but also reduce the likelihood of adverse outcomes for HHM youth. Access to support services at school can lead to resource gains for HHM students, which in turn, may result in improved outcomes for HHM youth both in childhood and adulthood as well.

The present study makes numerous contributions to the research on homeless youth populations and academic performance. Moreover, it addresses the paucity of literature regarding accessibility of support services coupled with performance outcomes for homeless youth in rural settings as well as those on Native American Reservations. Lastly, as a mixed methods case study, the present study utilizes the less popular mixed methods research design when examining this exceptional, yet complex, population of students.

Definition of Key Terms

City-Small: Is defined as territory inside an Urbanized Area and inside a Principal City with population less than 100,000 (NCES, n.d.-b).

Doubled-up: Is defined as sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason ([State] Department of Education, 2021b).

Highly mobile: Is defined as any student who enrolls in two or more public schools during an academic year, but does not include the migrant student population ([State] Department of Education, 2011).

Homeless: Is defined as any individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (NAEHCY, 2017).

Locale classification: Is defined as a general geographic indicator that describes the type of area where a school is located. All territory is classified into four types- Rural, Town, Suburban, and City, and each type is divided into three subtypes based on population size or proximity to populated areas (NCES, n.d.-a).

Rural-Distant: Is Census-defined rural territory that is more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an Urbanized Area, as well as rural territory that is more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an Urban Cluster (NCES, n.d.-b).

Youth: Are defined as children up to 21 years of age (NCHE, 2017).

CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The following review of literature begins by providing a description of the historical context of homelessness in the United States, provides background on the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (MVA) of 1987, details various typologies and subgroups of homelessness, and current national trends and statistics. Next, relevant research as it relates to geographic trends of homelessness, access and availability of support services for homeless youth, and impacts of homelessness on standardized assessments and academic achievement is presented. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the theoretical framework guiding the study and the conceptual framework informing the review of literature.

Historical Context

Due to prolonged economic recessions, lack of affordable housing options, tight job markets, low wages, and unskilled workers entering the workforce in recent years, the number of youth and families experiences homelessness in the United States has increased dramatically in recent years. The accelerated spread of homelessness from urban areas, where it had been largely confined up until the early 2000s, to small towns and rural locales all across America fueled renewed interest in research on homelessness in the United States (Rahman et al., 2015). As a result of the dramatic rise in the homeless population, by 2015, Rahman et al. (2015) cited there were at least 27 federal entities that existed which regulated programs serving individuals experiencing homelessness. A comprehensive review of literature citing the most enduring and evolving contributors of homelessness since 1970 by Giano et al. (2020) found that

family instability, mental illness, unemployment and poverty, substance use, and unstable living arrangements were the five most frequently cited contributors to homelessness.

Defining Homelessness

Various government agencies supporting individuals experiencing homelessness have developed their own definitions for what it means to be homeless. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for instance, tends to have a more restrictive definition of homelessness than the one used by public schools. Largely, the HUD's definition excludes families and youth who are doubling up with others due to loss of housing and/or economic hardship, in addition to those who are staying in motels that are not being paid for by government agencies or charities. The definition used in the MVA is more inclusive because it includes doubled-up youth living with others in nonpermanent housing (Cutuli, 2018). Ultimately, it is local homeless education liaisons however, that have the authority to determine whether a child or youth meets the HUD's definition of homeless to qualify them for HUD homeless assistance programs (National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth [NAEHCY], 2017).

Typologies

The National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH, n.d.) delineates typologies of homelessness into three categories: chronic, transitional, and episodic. Individuals considered chronically homeless are those that are entrenched in the shelter system so shelters are no longer an emergency arrangement but rather, considered long-term housing. Statistics show that those dealing with chronic homelessness are likely to be older, are chronically unemployed, and often suffer from disabilities and substance abuse

issues (NCH, n.d.). Henry et al. (2021) found the number of individuals with chronic patterns of homelessness increased by fifteen percent between 2019 and 2020.

Individuals that experience transitional homelessness are those that typically enter the shelter system for one stay or for a short period of time. Transitional homelessness is the short amount of time between being in a shelter and finding more stable housing. Individuals experiencing transitional homelessness tend to be younger, and usually become homeless as a result of some catastrophic event. With its high turnover rate, this is the largest category of homelessness and accounts for the majority of homeless individuals (NCH, n.d.). The third commonly cited type of homelessness is episodic, which is defined as the frequent shuttling in and out of homelessness (NCH, n.d.). Individuals that are considered episodically homeless also tend to be younger, but unlike those considered transitionally homeless, these individuals are typically chronically unemployed and often suffer from medical, mental health, and substance abuse problems as well (NCH, n.d.).

Although the 3-category typology of chronic, transitional, and episodic forms of homelessness are frequently examined by experts in the field, McAllister et al. (2011) argued for a rethinking of these dominant temporally based typologies of homelessness based on flaws in the logic of how these typologies were theorized, designed, and analyzed. Ultimately, McAllister et al. (2011) contend that other temporal and nontemporal typologies of homelessness may be more useful, both for constructing theories and for policy making, as evidenced by the 10-group typology that was identified using a time-patterned analysis approach, as a result of studying both periods of sheltered, and unsheltered homelessness. Specially within the context of homelessness in

rural communities where many individuals experiencing homelessness remain hidden from the vast majority of public view because they typically underutilize support services when compared to homeless individuals in other typologies, it may be worthwhile to consider adding hidden homelessness as a fourth common typology.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (MVA) was originally authorized in 1987 and was subsequently reauthorized in 2015 under the Every Student Succeeds Act (MVA, 2015). The MVA was ratified with the intention of “[improving] the identification of homeless children and youths... and [enabling] such children and youths to enroll in, attend, and succeed in school” by reducing barriers to enrollment, attendance, and achievement by providing equal access to education for homeless youth (MVA, 2015; [State] Department of Education, 2021b). As stated in the MVA, all public school districts are legally obligated to comply with the requirement to identify and serve school-age children and youth experiencing homelessness including honoring HHM students’ rights to enroll immediately at the school of their choice without facing enrollment delays due to the inability to provide sufficient documentation. The MVA aims to minimize the adverse impacts of school mobility while maximizing time spent in school for HHM students (MVA, 2015). Under the MVA, all states must provide access to services until high school graduation or the equivalent, but all homeless children under the age of 21 are eligible for services (National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth [NAEHCY], 2017). Furthermore, all of the more than 17,000 public school districts in the United States are obligated to designate a local

homeless education liaison to serve the needs of the district's homeless students (U.S. Department of Education [ED], 2020).

Prior to the ratification of the MVA in 1987, there were virtually no policies either at the local, state, or federal level that addressed the educational rights of homeless students. Aviles de Bradley (2015) referred to the MVA as a “first step” in combatting homelessness but asserted it is inadequate at addressing all of the causes and symptoms associated with youth homelessness (p.7). Despite the growing population of homeless school-aged children, federal funding earmarked for the MVA is on the downturn and results in underfunding of essential resources and services necessitated by HHM students. It is often social workers at both the state and local levels that are responsible for implementing the MVA and carrying out its provisions (Canfield & Teasley, 2015).

There is little consensus among scholars on the effectiveness of the MVA and in fact, a study by Hendricks and Barkley (2012) found no significant difference in end-of-year test scores of homeless students in local education agencies that received MVA grants when compared to homeless students in unfunded education agencies. Additionally, the findings in Rahman's (2014) study revealed that participating Black homeless youth struggled to meet their educational objectives despite receiving support under the MVA. A report published by NCHE (2021) indicated there was little change in the number of school districts that received subgrants under the MVA during the period covered in the report, with 4,400 school districts nationally, or 23% of all districts, receiving some award during SY 2018-19. However, for SY 2018-19, states provided an average per-pupil amount of approximately \$95 in McKinney-Vento funding to offer

additional supports for homeless students in school districts, having increased the per-pupil funding by approximately \$18 from the 2016-17 SY (NCHE, 2021).

National Trends and Statistics

Agencies tasked with conducting counts of youth homelessness often report inconsistencies, and likely underestimations, of actual numbers due to the extreme difficulty associated with pursuing an accurate count of the number of homeless youth in America due to multiple factors (Grant et al., 2013; Morton et al., 2017; Morton et al., 2018b; National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2021). For instance, Morton et al. (2017) reported an overall 4.3% of household prevalence of any homelessness for 13-to 17-year-olds and 12.5% overall for 18- to 25-year-olds, while Morton et al., (2018b) found the prevalence of any homelessness to be 1 in 30 for 13-to-17-year-olds, and 1 in 10 for young adults aged 18-25. Meanwhile, the national Voices of Youth Count (VoYC) survey (Morton et al., 2018b) estimated approximately 4.2 million youth ages 13-25 experienced homelessness in the year prior to the survey's administration in 2016/2017. Contributing to the difficulty of obtaining an accurate count is that the definitions used for homeless youth have differed historically between the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Education (ED). Inconsistencies across definitions, variability in counting methods, coupled with their variable implementation at different levels of government in addition to the difficulty of accessing the homeless youth population due to their transitory and hidden nature of experiences, all contribute to the monumental task of obtaining an accurate count of homeless youth (Anthony & Fischer, 2016; Morton et al. 2018b). Although point-in-time counts are the most frequently utilized when counting homeless individuals, these counts

provide only a “snapshot” of homelessness for a very specific, usually short, period of time and thus, overlooks many individuals either not currently homeless or those that remain hidden from public view (Anderson & Collins, 2014, p.962).

Howland et al. (2017) not only established that factors including minority status, gender, receipt of special education services, and rates of school absenteeism are all risk factors for homeless youth, but also found there might not be one homeless living situation that is better than another in regards to its effects on academic achievement for homeless youth. Therefore, Howland et al. recommended investing in sufficient time, resources, and professional training for homeless education liaisons, as well as enhancing awareness of the law, stabilizing of basic needs, and improving collaboration among community agencies and schools as viable methods to improve academic outcomes for homeless students.

Morton et al. (2018b) found that nearly all youth that participated in the Voices of Youth Count survey reported chronic childhood adversity and approximately one-third of interviewees reported the loss of a parent or caregiver. Furthermore, Morton et al. also found a correlation between homelessness and interaction with other public systems at high rates. For instance, 46% of homeless youth had been in juvenile detention, jail, or prison, 29% had been in foster care, and 17% had been in both justice and child welfare systems. A study by Cobb-Clark and Zhu (2017) conducted in Australia found both men and women who were homeless for the first time before the age of 15 were significantly less likely to be employed as adults, and women even more so.

Subgroups

Henry et al. (2021) reported that the majority of individuals experiencing homelessness in 2020 were men or boys (61%) and in particular, African American and indigenous peoples remained considerably overrepresented among the homeless population. Additionally, it was found that almost 4 in 10 individuals experiencing homelessness in January 2020 were Black or African American. Meanwhile, women and girls made up 39% of the total homeless population, and transgender or gender-nonconforming individuals made up less than 1%. When surveying youth in particular, Morton et al. (2018c) found that specific subpopulations of youth are at higher risk for experiencing homelessness including youth of color (Black, Hispanic, American Indian, Alaskan Native youth) as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth, youth with children, and youth without a high school degree. For instance, it was found that LGBT and queer young adults had twice the risk of being homeless when compared to their non-LGBT peers, reported higher rates of trauma and adversity, and had twice the rate of early death (Morton et al., 2018c). Research consistently demonstrates that belonging to multiple high-risk subgroups results in compounded risk for homelessness, and that young Black men who identified as LGBT experienced the highest rates of homelessness (Morton et al., 2018b). Additionally, young adults who are involved in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems are more likely to experience homelessness (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2021).

A study by Begg and colleagues (2017) analyzing the school experiences of African American homeless youth revealed that although these students pursued predictability, personal connections, and academic achievement while in school, they

found it difficult to envision a safe future for themselves as they worked to construct meaning out of their school experiences, understand their transitions, and set life goals. Another study of Black homeless youth residing in the District of Columbia conducted by Rahman (2014) found the vast majority (66.14%) of homeless students sampled experienced homelessness at age 15 or younger while approximately 37% of students sampled experienced homelessness for the first time at age 13 or younger. In order to advance the success of Black homeless youth in the American education system, Begg et al. advised that school leaders provide support services that support HHM student development to shape realistic educational goals and move toward systemic change by way of collaboration with administrators and stakeholders. However, despite the high prevalence of homelessness among the Black youth surveyed, resilience was a common theme as the vast majority maintained positive attitudes, considered their homelessness to be a temporary situation, and many reported seeking help daily and often (Rahman, 2014).

Urban, Rural, Native American and Indigenous Homelessness

Urban Homelessness

On a single night in January 2020, more than half (52%) of all people experiencing homelessness were in one of the nation's 50 largest cities, with approximately 6 of every 10 individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness residing in urban areas. From 2019 to 2020, the number of homeless individuals residing in major cities across the United States saw the largest absolute increase, with approximately 5,859 more individuals counted in 2020 than the previous year, resulting in a 3% increase overall. Additionally, all nationwide Continuums of Care (CoC) categories reported

increases in the number of unsheltered individuals, with major cities reporting 5,815 more individuals staying outside compared to the prior year (Henry et al, 2021).

Rural Homelessness

Henry et al. (2021) found that in 2020, individuals experiencing homelessness in largely rural CoCs were more likely to be white (73%), male (66%), and over the age of 24 (89%). However, when comparing across all CoCs, adolescents in the under 18 category, as well as individuals in the 18 to 24 category, recorded the highest percentages in largely rural CoCs, with 1.5% and 8.6%, respectively. Furthermore, females were also more likely to be homeless in largely rural CoCs, with approximately 33% of all homeless women residing in rural communities.

Debunking the common misconception that homelessness is predominantly an urban issue, the Voice of Youth Count Report (Morton et al., 2018b) found the household prevalence rates for any homelessness during a 12-month period for 13-17 year olds was statistically equal between rural and urban counties at, 4.4% and 4.2%, respectively. These numbers indicate that youth homelessness is just as much of a challenge in rural communities as it is in urban areas based on the share of population size. However, because poverty rates tend to be higher in in nonmetro areas, and rural communities offer fewer economic opportunities while also lacking services to assist homeless youth, this often forces youth to go without necessary help or made to travel long distances because it is more difficult for rural youth to connect with education and employment opportunities when compared to youth in larger, urban areas (Morton et al., 2018a).

Although the study conducted by Dashora et al. (2018) included only adults experiencing homelessness in a resource-dependent rural community, the study

successfully utilized a community-based approach to engage homeless individuals in a resource dependent town and highlighted numerous challenges this population faces such as housing shortages, substance abuse issues, mental health needs, and lack of support systems. By fostering connections between the homeless participants and community stakeholder, the visual methods approach utilized in Dashora et al. allowed homeless individuals a platform to share their stories and express their actual needs through an open gate of communication.

Native American and Indigenous Homelessness

Even though American Indian, Alaska Native, Pacific Islander, and Native Hawaiian populations account for 1% of the total U.S. population, they are disproportionately affected by homelessness because statistics indicate together they make up 5% of the homeless population (Henry et al., 2021). In 2020, the number of Native Americans experiencing individual homelessness increased by 5% overall, while the number of homeless individuals in the unsheltered category rose by 8%. Moreover, Henry et al. reported largely rural CoCs had the highest rate of Indigenous homeless individuals of all geographic categories, with approximately 7% identifying as Native American and/or Pacific Islander. Morton et al. (2018a) found American Indian and Alaska Native youth experience more than double the risk of homelessness as other youth, although most were not located in rural communities.

A study by Anderson and Collins (2014) comparing the prevalence and causes of urban homelessness among Indigenous peoples across Canada, Australia, and New Zealand uncovered that Indigenous peoples were overrepresented in every case and that in many instances, the number of Indigenous peoples represented in homeless counts was

at least five times higher than the prevalence in corresponding urban populations. Historical colonialism, intergenerational trauma, and difficulty accessing urban housing were all contributing factors to the systemic difficulties perpetuating the elevated rates of homelessness of Indigenous peoples across the three countries.

Role of Schools

The number of students experiencing homelessness has steadily increased over the past three decades beginning in the 1980s and sharply increased in the 1990s and again during the Great Recession in the early 21st century (Masten et al., 2015), with public schools across the United States reportedly serving over one million homeless students every year for the last decade (ED, 2020). In fact, since the 2006-07 SY, the number of homeless children and youth attending public schools has nearly doubled (U.S. Department of Education [ED], 2016). Schools are in a unique position not only because they are able to coordinate and provide support services for the ever-increasing population of HHM students at little or no cost, but also, school officials are often privy to collecting and accessing vast databases of information concerning HHM student needs and achievement. Access to HHM student data and records is an enormous advantage when serving this subpopulation because if interpreted correctly, this rich data can inform the tailoring and facilitating of needs-based services and interventions to better serve this unique population of students in each school and district.

Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (MVA, 2015), homeless students are guaranteed specific protections, which means state and local education agencies (LEAs) are required to institute policies and procedures that remove barriers to accessing a high-quality education for homeless students (ED, 2016). Under the

McKinney-Vento Act, specific services are required to be provided for HHM students to ensure they have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in school. Some of these services include transportation to and from their school of origin, and access to services for which they are eligible including: special education services, preschool programs, school nutrition programs, language assistance for English learners, career and technical education, gifted and talented programs, magnet schools, charter schools, summer and online learning programs, and before and after school care. Although every LEA must designate a homeless education liaison, the work of adequately serving HHM students is often a coordinated school/district effort, involving school leaders, teachers, counselors, and additional critical staff to ensure HHM students are correctly and promptly identified and referred for appropriate support services (ED, 2016).

Standardized Assessments and Academic Achievement

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2021), all states are required to administer state standardized assessments because these assessments serve to advance educational equity, identify student needs, and target specific resources to address those needs. Ample research has been conducted comparing HHM student performance on state standardized assessments to non-homeless nor highly mobile peers, while some researchers have also aimed to identify factors that influence performance outcomes for HHM students. For example, Cutuli et al. (2013), NCHE (2021), and Obradović et al. (2009) demonstrated that HHM youth underperform academically in school when compared to their more advantaged and stable-housed peers, including students that are economically disadvantaged but not homeless. Supporting the finding that both disadvantaged groups of HHM students and low-income nonmobile students showed

markedly lower initial achievement than more advantaged peers, but that HHM students manifested the greatest risk (Obradović et al., 2009), the report published by NCHE found that nationally, economically disadvantaged students outscored homeless students by about 8-9 percentage points in most subjects and grade levels. For the 2018-19 SY, the percentage of homeless students that achieved proficiency across the entire U.S. in Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science was 29.6%, 24.5%, and 28.4%, respectively, compared to economically disadvantaged peers who were 37.9% proficient in Reading/Language Arts, 33.9% in Mathematics, and 37.3% in Science (NCHE, 2021, p.30).

Although permanently housed adolescents whose families received public assistance scored just as poorly on standardized tests of academic achievement when compared to formerly homeless peers in Rafferty et al. (2004), being homeless did present increased short-term risks for formerly homeless students including higher rates of school mobility and grade retention, as well as worse maternal-reported school experiences, and decreased plans for post-secondary education by self-report. A more recent study by Cutuli et al. (2013) did in fact find variance in academic achievement when comparing HHM student achievement for third through eighth grades to groups of more stably housed peers. Furthermore, the HHM group showed widening of the achievement gap over time compared to students identified as lower risk, and unfortunately, no evidence was found that HHM students had narrowed the achievement gaps over time.

A study by Darbeda and colleagues (2018) including nearly 600 homeless children in Paris, France determined that the majority of participating children (80.9%)

were considered developmentally delayed, leading the authors to conclude that there is a high prevalence of developmental delays among children growing up homeless. Darbeda et al. suggested implementing long-term integrated programs to improve parenting as well as providing homeless children with opportunities for stimulation and socialization in daycare centers, schools, and shelters. Additionally, the authors recommended medical practices that minimize negative effects of early living conditions affecting child development, some of which can be addressed within a school setting. Moreover, school leaders should consider the findings from Howland et al. (2017) that indicated factors such as being Caucasian, not receiving special education services, and having higher rates of school attendance all serve as protective aspects for academic achievement and all positively contributed to passing scores on standardized assessments when providing services and administering standardized assessments. Lastly, because Morton et al. (2018b) found one of the strongest risk correlates for homelessness was lack of a high school diploma or GED, school officials, especially at the secondary level, should ensure high school graduation is a top priority for both currently and formerly homeless youth.

COVID-19 Pandemic-Related Learning Loss

The COVID-19 pandemic struck the United States in the early spring of 2020. As a result, the majority of U.S. schools closed their doors, discontinued in-person learning, and either closed for the remainder of the school year or switched to virtual learning models. Because of such a monumental disruption to learning, the U.S. Department of Education granted all 50 states waivers for the 2019-20 SY informing states that they could forego state standardized assessment administration for spring of 2020 (Gewertz, 2020). Although states have returned to administering state standardized assessments

since then, the question of whether the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected learning, and if so, to what degree, has been examined in many studies since the return to in-person learning. A study conducted by Kuhfeld et al. (2020) projected that students returning to school in fall of 2020 would have reduced learning gains in math and reading, 63% to 68%, and 37% to 50%, respectively, compared to what is expected in a typical school year. A subsequent study by Skar, Graham, & Huebner (2022) found that first graders educated during the pandemic scored significantly lower than when compared to students in the same schools a year prior, bolstering the claims that the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in learning loss.

Acknowledging that the COVID-19 pandemic likely resulted in significant disruptions to learning for students across the nation, the year after the COVID-19 pandemic started, the U.S. Department of Education (ED, 2021) released further guidance on how parents and educators alike should interpret the state standardized assessment data for the 2020-21 SY. The U.S. Department of Education (2021) cautioned that assessment data should not be used for accountability purposes, but rather act “as a source of information for parents and educators to target resources and support” (para. 1). Therefore, it is assumed that learning loss in the classroom attributed to COVID-19 closures and remote learning is likely to be reflected in state standardized assessment data as well.

Supports for HHM Youth in Schools

A noteworthy study by Wright and colleagues (2019) evaluating perceptions of pre-service teachers regarding student homelessness revealed that many pre-service teachers enter teacher preparation with misconceptions about children experiencing

homelessness by holding narrow definitions of homelessness and ascribing to inaccurate stereotypes. However, by incorporating information about homelessness into coursework, encouraging pre-service teachers' self-reflection, and bolstering positive relationships between pre-service teachers and homeless students, pre-service teachers were able to reshape their perspectives on homelessness. Particularly when working with pre-service teachers, by redesigning professional development and providing structured learning opportunities, school leaders can facilitate the development of humanizing pedagogical practices that increase equity, inclusion, and understanding toward homeless students.

Recent research has found a positive correlation between receipt of social and emotional supports and outcomes for homeless youth, both from peers and adults (Barman-Adhikari et al., 2016; Ferguson & Xie, 2012; Kidd et al., 2019). Because rates of emotional support were found to be greater than rates of instrumental support for homeless youth in Barman-Adhikari et al., findings indicated homeless youth were more likely to have someone to confide in as opposed to having support systems that provide tangible resources for them. A study by Ferguson and Xie discovered that homeless youth were less likely to use substances once they found a caring adult in the community that supported them. Additionally, a study by Kidd et al. demonstrated peer support can be a powerful tool for homeless youth, as many of the participants accessed peer support through at least one avenue, resulting in perceived gains in key life areas for those individuals. If schools and districts can increase access to the right types of social and emotional supports for students experiencing homelessness, this can result in significant gains in the lives of HHM students.

Research from Masten and colleagues (2015) found executive functioning to have potential influence on school success for HHM students, especially during their preschool years. Therefore, the authors recommended educators facilitate classroom interventions that promote higher executive functioning in order to increase academic success and resilience in HHM students. Particularly in the case with Black homeless youth, 71% of participants from Rahman's (2014) study identified educational support as one of their primary needs in school. Therefore, homeless liaisons and educators should focus on improving opportunities for educational support, especially those working in districts with large populations of Black homeless students.

The U.S. Department of Education (2016) provided recommendations for steps that homeless education liaisons and school personnel can take to help HHM students achieve highly in their schools and districts. For starters, it was recommended that school officials create a safe and supportive school climate while building trusting relationships with HHM students to aid in destigmatizing homelessness. The prompt and accurate identification of HHM students is also crucial so that students can be evaluated for eligibility of services as soon as possible. School leaders and classroom teachers especially can review and revise policies and procedures to ensure that HHM students are not further marginalized or unfairly penalized for being homeless and are being treated in an equitable manner. It is also the responsibility of local homeless liaisons to ensure they are up-to-date on new government policies and programs that affect the educational outcomes for HHM students and to properly connect HHM students and their families to services in their community (ED, 2016).

Resiliency Among HHM Youth

Resiliency, or the ability to “show competence despite experiencing risk,” contributes to the variability in individual students’ achievement and explains why some youth, despite having been homeless, are still able to demonstrate academic resiliency (Cutuli et al., 2013, p.844). A study by Obradović et al. (2009) confirmed that even when differences in factors such as attendance rates, gender, race, and receipt of special services were accounted for, HHM students still demonstrated a great deal of variability in academic achievement, suggesting resiliency is the product of many complex processes. Building upon the findings in Obradović et al., Cutuli et al. noted that although achievement gaps appeared stable or widened between HHM students and those in lower risk groups when examining academic achievement data of third through eighth graders, 45% of HHM students scored within or above the average range, indicating academic resilience. Cutuli’s (2018) study with high school students in Philadelphia also supported prior findings on HHM students’ academic resilience indicating that youth are able to adapt over time following the acute stress of a homelessness episode, as evidenced by the fact that current or recently homeless youth were more likely to report a serious problem with alcohol, substances, or mental health than their less recent homeless peers. Although it was found that both chronic and acute sources of risk created a risk gradient for high school youth in Philadelphia, with those who had experienced homelessness in the past more likely to be at a higher level of risk than never-homeless youth, about 25% of youth who had experienced homelessness did not show problems and instead, demonstrated resiliency (Cutuli, 2018). In the study by Rafferty et al. (2004) that compared school experiences and achievement between formerly homeless and consistently housed

adolescents, findings indicated that homelessness contributed to declines in academic achievement, particularly in the short term, but after five years, had no effect. The authors concluded that these findings might be an indication of resiliency in children in the long-term after their families have been rehoused.

Social Interventions

Ultimately, the interventions that successfully combat youth homelessness will require coordinated efforts through education, child welfare, juvenile justice, and health and human services systems (National Conference of State Legislatures, n.d.). Morton et al. (2018b) stated that some intensive care management and support interventions resulted in reductions of youth homelessness. Both housing interventions, as well as non-housing interventions were found to have an impact on youth homelessness, but to varying degrees. Based on results from the small study conducted by Kidd et al. (2019) evaluating the impact of peer support on 28 formerly homeless youth, the authors concluded that peer support could be both a feasible and potentially impactful intervention to address the complex problem of youth homelessness because participants who engaged more with peers were significantly more likely to engage with employment, education, and/or volunteering compared to youth with no or low engagement with peer workers. A study by Culhane et al. (2011) that investigated the pattern of behavioral health inpatient and out-of-home placement services for homeless families before, during, and after shelter use, comparing families by their pattern of shelter use and types of housing, found there was no significant increase in the use of inpatient behavioral health services, nor was it associated with an increase in child welfare placement services. However, despite the fact that results also indicated that shelter use among families

serves as a substitution of mainstream services, with the exception of foster care placement, the use of shelters did not reduce future need for intensive support services. Responses and services that are safe and affirming are particularly crucial for engaging LGBTQ youth (Morton et al., 2018c). Culhane et al. suggested more careful and systematic screening of homeless families for behavioral health and child welfare risks, and those identified as at-risk should receive services to prevent unnecessary hospitalizations and avert placement of children in foster care, especially after they exit the shelter system. Although findings in Barman-Adhikari et al. (2016) indicated that the support homeless youth received represented bridging social capital, these positive findings were overshadowed by the fact that social capital from professionals was notably low, indicating disengagement between homeless youth and the agencies designed to serve them.

Specifically, when addressing homelessness in Native American and Indigenous communities, Jackson and Fashant (2021) advocated taking a community-based approach to dispel harmful myths and stereotypes of homelessness by educating the public and collectively implementing culturally relevant interventions and services. Emerging research demonstrates that homeless youth who have access to different sources of social support experience improved outcomes across several domains (Barman-Adhikari et al., 2016). A study by Anthony and Fischer (2016) found that the majority of homeless youth surveyed were looking for a job and this suggests that with some employment assistance and public assistance benefits, these youth may achieve self-sufficiency. For educators and additional individuals that work in capacities in which they identify and serve students experiencing homelessness, Cutuli (2018) advocated sensitivity toward higher

rates of victimization and behavioral health problems through trauma-informed care approaches when serving this subpopulation of students was key.

Because young people experiencing homelessness in rural areas face a unique set of challenges ranging from lack of access to youth-centric services and housing options, to economic transitions and drug epidemics, collective action from all levels of government are required to end homelessness in rural areas. Identifying ways to provide access to short-term and long-term housing options, tailoring outreach strategies to meet the needs of hidden and transient youth, and providing behavioral health and employment supports can all serve to help homeless youth in rural communities sustainably exit homelessness. Furthermore, because there are typically less formal resources available for homeless youth in rural communities, building positive relationships between homeless youth and caring adults in the community may be particularly impactful. Lastly, connecting families early and effectively with economic, parenting, and behavioral health supports could prevent some instances of homelessness (Morton et al., 2018a).

Theoretical Framework

Collins and Stockton (2018) explained a theory to be: “a big idea that organizes many other ideas with a high degree of explanatory power” and provides a lens for how the study will convey new knowledge (p.2). The role of theory in this mixed methods study will serve as the basis for analytic generalization and allow the researcher to “shed empirical light on some theoretical concepts” (Yin, 2018, p.38). Critical theory, an emancipatory theory, was selected for this study because it coincides with the research design and purpose of the research: (1) to determine whether having access to support services impacts achievement on state standardized assessments, and (2) to address issues

of social justice and formulate action plans to enact systemic change. In fact, Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) attest that because emancipatory theories operate inductively and built to the end result of change to improve the lives of marginalized individuals, this stance has even come to be expected from some scholars in mixed methods research.

A critical theory framework is advantageous for this study because it emphasizes the inclusion of participant voice in many aspects of the research process particularly when it comes to designing questions, collecting and analyzing data, and compiling and sharing the results of the final report. Since homeless youth are at the center of this present study, it is believed that the problems faced by this particular marginalized group are of paramount importance, and thus, warrant research that contains a critical action research component. Critical theory is an appropriate paradigm for research affecting homeless youth because this subgroup frequently faces oppression, suppression, and alienation due to limited financial resources and lack of access to stable housing. Thus, this subgroup could benefit from empowering research that aids them in transcending the constraints placed on them by society. A critical theory paradigm is more advantageous for this study when compared to other paradigms such as social constructivism and postpositivism because these frameworks lack the action research component to enact change and fail to address issues related to social justice, equity, nonviolence, peace, and universal human rights (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

According to Collins and Stockton (2018), epistemological and ontological assumptions frame how a researcher perceives the world and produces knowledge. The ontological assumption of critical theory is that “The apprehended world makes a material difference in terms of race, gender, and class” (Hatch, 2002, p.13). This theory

states that all individuals perceive the world differently based on their different identity traits and experiences, and their unique virtual reality is shaped by a multitude of social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values. The epistemological assumptions of a critical theory paradigm include subjectivist and value-mediated findings (Lincoln et al., 2018). The methodological assumption underpinning critical theory is transformative inquiry, whose goal is to “raise the consciousness of those being oppressed because of historically situated structures tied to race, gender, and class” (Hatch, 2002, p.17).

Although Lincoln et al. presented the methodological assumption of critical theory as dialogic and dialectical, transformative inquiry and dialectical assumptions are not mutually exclusive and are, in fact, very compatible in a critical theory paradigm. The philosophical assumptions informing a critical theory paradigm assert that knowledge is subjective and socially constructed, findings are value-mediated, and as a result, values and beliefs held by the researcher influence the outcome of the research, and is therefore symbiotic with researcher actions and dispositions (Collins & Stockton, 2018). A critical theory paradigm allows for participant voices to permeate all throughout the research process and expects research findings to be actionable. The object of this research is to expose the oppression and inequities faced by homeless youth by advocating a call to transform social order and systemic relations that historically serve to silence this marginalized group (Brown, 1994 as cited in Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Conceptual Framework

Collins and Stockton (2018) referred to a conceptual framework as a “map” illustrating how the relevant literature works together in a particular study (p.2). Because individuals experiencing homelessness typically experience complex trauma and are

considered a high-risk group, the conceptual framework selected for the present study is an integrated resources perspective framework developed by Keane et al. (2020), built upon the core concept of Layne and colleagues' (2009) "risk factor caravans." The resources perspective framework provides insight into the pervasive and enduring complex trauma many homeless individuals face within the context of ecological vulnerability and resource loss and gain. Keane et al. presented a conceptualization of complex trauma as a "risk factor caravan" that undermines resources, has a strong relationship with ecological vulnerability, and places individuals at risk of adverse consequences. The resulting adverse consequences are especially troubling because personal resources are particularly important in the context of complex trauma and ecological vulnerability.

Complex Trauma

Complex trauma is defined as trauma that is prolonged, repetitive and cumulative, and may occur within a specific context (Courtois & Ford, 2009), but can also result from a single traumatic incident or catastrophic event (Courtois, 2008). The term complex trauma can also be used to describe the unique symptoms and events that result following exposure to the trauma (Kliethermes et al., 2014). When children in particular are exposed to interpersonal trauma, this leads to complex structural and functional changes in brain development (Delima & Vimpani, 2011), which often results in an inability to regulate emotions resulting in the manifestation of problematic behavioral control or dissociative behaviors, or both (Elzy et al., 2013). Consequently, children may express maladaptive coping strategies that frequently result in substance dependence, eating

disorders, risky sexual behavior, self-harm and mutilation, overt aggression, and extreme social withdrawal (Elzy et al., 2013).

Conservation of Resources and Ecological Congruence

Keane et al. (2020) posited that homelessness is the result of a specific circumstance of vulnerability, defined as “the degree to which a system is susceptible to, and unable to cope with, injury, damage or harm” (De Lange et al., 2010, p.3872). Drawing upon Hobfoll’s (1989) Conservation of Resources theory and Hobfoll’s (1988) model of Ecological Congruence, Keane et al. demonstrated the positive relationship between complex trauma and stress, and the subsequent risk of adverse consequences as a result of resource loss on the homeless population. Conservation of Resources theory postulates that humans strive to retain, protect, and build resources while minimizing resource loss (Hobfoll, 1989) and the Ecological Congruence model hypothesized that a person’s level of success in combatting stressors is dictated by their needs, time, perception and values, as well as resources and environmental demand (Hobfoll, 1988).

Risk Factor Caravans

Layne et al. (2009) posited the concept of risk factor caravans to explain how clusters of risk factors tend to co-occur, accumulate, accrue, and pass onward in their harmful effects as they proceed with an individual across time. Although resource loss and gain are common aspects of everyday life, in the context of complex traumatic stress and ecological vulnerability for individuals facing homelessness, resource loss spiraling becomes the primary concern. As a result of repeated interpersonal trauma throughout an individual’s life, the added constant strain becomes a risk factor caravan. Keane et al. (2020) proposed that personal resources “Act as an integral conduit between complex

trauma risk factor caravan and resource pathways” and that levels of high personal resources may offset the adverse outcomes of complex trauma risk factor caravans and allow individuals to regain resource stability (p.233).

Ecological Vulnerability, Support Services, and Academic Achievement

Building upon the ideas presented by Keane and colleagues (2020) regarding the context of complex trauma on ecological vulnerability, it is hypothesized that with increased access to, and utilization of support services, HHM students will increase achievement on state standardized assessments. When HHM students and their families are able to accumulate resources and maximize resource gain instead of resource loss, these students will have their basic needs met and thus, be better equipped to succeed and achieve highly in school. Approaching HHM students from a trauma-informed care approach, remaining cognizant of their increased risks to adverse outcomes, and delivering appropriate support services can all aid in the reduction of risk factor caravans and offset the negative consequences associated with exposure to complex trauma while simultaneously increasing achievement and success in school.

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

Overview

The following chapter will describe the Institutional Review Board approval process in addition to all ethical considerations taken into account prior to the commencement of the study. Trustworthiness, and researcher positionality and reflexivity as it relates to and shapes the present study will also be discussed. A rationale for a mixed methods design and case study sub approach will then be presented and the chapter concludes with a discussion of research procedures including sampling, data collection, and analysis strategies.

IRB Approval and Ethical Considerations

Full approval to conduct the present study in all Districts Alpha, Beta, and Gamma was granted by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Institutional Review Board (IRB) on April 7, 2022. Because District Alpha is located on a Native American reservation, additional separate approval was required by the Tribe's IRB. Prior to being fully approved to conduct research in District Alpha, the Tribe granted approval for conducting the research on February 21, 2022. By submitting a proposal of the anticipated research study to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's IRB as well as the Tribe's IRB, the researcher is demonstrating that all ethical matters pertaining to the research regarding respect for human subjects, doing no harm, and considering distributive justice as it benefits specific societal groups have been carefully considered and constructed, and are also in accordance with tribal customs, traditions, and laws.

Ethical considerations were at the forefront of the study, with safeguards put in place to protect the participants' identities and personal information as well as ensure

researcher compliance with ethical standards and principles for conducting rigorous research in a trustworthy manner (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A focus on the respect for persons and an emphasis on the principles of beneficence and justice guided all aspects of the research study. Therefore, all participants were not deemed fully eligible to participate until they provided written informed consent (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). All participating school faculty members were first required to provide written, informed consent (see Appendix A).

Pseudonyms were used to protect individual identities and ensure anonymity of the participating school districts. Additional steps were taken to maintain confidentiality and preservation of private information including the prompt removal of personal identification information on assessment scores and interview transcripts as well as handling and storing of data in secure and private locations, and presenting assessment data in the aggregate. Any and all private identification information that was revealed through data collection was removed and redacted. Furthermore, all portions of sources and citations that revealed specific district information were blinded.

Trustworthiness

Marshall and Rossman (2016) emphasized the intertwining of trustworthiness and ethics to address concerns of goodness related to the development of a qualitative research design. Beyond obtaining IRB approval and participant consent, and maintaining confidentiality and anonymity throughout the research process, qualitative researchers are obligated to ensure the rigor and usefulness of their study by incorporating validity strategies throughout to maximize trustworthiness and attention to ethical considerations. To address concerns of credibility and construct validity (Yin, 2018), the researcher had

prolonged immersion in and engagement with the research environment and participants and engaged in reflexivity throughout the research process. Although it was initially anticipated that data collection and analysis would take four months to complete, it actually took ten. Member checks were incorporated throughout each phase of data collection to present multiple opportunities for the researcher to share power and include participants' voices in the final interpretations. Multiple sources of evidence were collected and data triangulation was utilized to encourage convergent lines of inquiry (Yin, 2018). Particularly a concern for explanatory case studies, addressing issues of internal validity required searching for disconfirming evidence, alternative explanations, and negative cases. Moreover, imbedding thick and rich descriptions, comparisons, and appropriate theories aided in strengthening external validity and generalizability beyond the study's initial scope (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2018). Concerns regarding reliability were addressed through the meticulous documentation of procedures using a case study protocol and through the development of a case study database (Yin, 2018). Lastly, peer debriefing with critical peers was implemented as the final step to discuss study findings and ensure analysis was accurately grounded in the data. The intent of these internal and external validity measures was to produce research findings that are more accurately, objectively, and neutrally represented (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity

Engaging in reflexivity is an essential component of qualitative studies (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Reflexivity is defined as the way researchers "position themselves," and convey how their background informs their interpretations in the study, and also what they have to gain from the research (Creswell & Poth, 2018,

p.44). In regards to my positionality, my lived experiences and knowledge inform the way I approach and conduct my research. Although I live a very privileged life now, that has not always been the case. I was born in Kazakhstan and was placed in an orphanage at a young age. I remained in the orphanage until the age of five, when I was very fortunate to be adopted by my parents in the United States. Ever since, I have lived a very privileged life, and received nothing short of a first-rate education. Although I may not have been homeless in the same way as the students in the research study, I believe my experience in the orphanage is somewhat similar to situations faced by a lot of homeless youth. Furthermore, I believe my upbringing has given me a more profound understanding for the way access to a quality education in the United States can change the trajectory of one's life.

Through research, scholars are presented with opportunities to learn about themselves, and more importantly, to learn with and about others. As a primarily qualitative researcher, I emphasize the importance of including the emic perspective and value including participants' voices that have been marginalized and silenced throughout history. Thus, the ultimate goal of this research is to facilitate positive, everlasting change by confronting systemic inequities and working to minimize social injustices, even if for only a small group of individuals.

Prior to pursuing my graduate degree, I worked as a public school educator on an American Indian Reservation for three years and was then a substitute teacher for a brief time in various schools and districts around the Midwest. I have taught in these schools and I have met these students. So although I mostly bring an etic perspective to the study, I also, to some degree, believe I present an insider's emic perspective as well based on

my lived experiences and exposure to the types of students and schools included in the present study. For that reason, I chose to share my findings with not only my advisor and committee members, but also with participants at each research site at the conclusion of the study. When the present study concludes, what I stand to personally gain is a doctorate degree, opportunities for publication, and perhaps a subsequent job offer.

Rationale for a Mixed Methods Design

Plano Clark and Ivankova (2016) defined mixed methods research as “a process of research in which researchers integrate quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis to best understand a research purpose” (p.4). The following notation illustrates the mixed methods explanatory sequential design utilized in the present study: quan →QUAL (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018, p.63). This notation indicates the presence of both a qualitative and quantitative strand in the study and illustrates the two strands of data collection will be implemented in a sequence, with the qualitative strand capitalized because greater emphasis will be given to the second, qualitative strand.

A mixed methods approach was believed to be the most advantageous for the present study because the goal was to report multiple perspectives, identify the complex interaction of factors in three particular contexts and situations, and to “[sketch] the larger picture that emerges” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p.44). Numerous rationales were applied to warrant the use of a mixed methods design and add legitimacy to methodological decisions in the present study. First and foremost, it was believed that one method alone would be less effective at addressing the present study’s problem and purpose and therefore, a mixed methods approach would result in a better understanding of the studied

phenomenon (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). Moreover, a mixed methods design not only permitted the researcher to address more complicated research questions, but also to collect a richer and stronger array of evidence than cannot be captured by using a single method independently (Yin, 2018). All five of Plano Clark and Ivankova's rationales for conducting mixed methods research: (a) offsetting strengths and weaknesses, (b) triangulation, (c) complementarity, (d) development, and (e) social justice, were found to be applicable to the present study's methods and methodology, resulting in a stronger case for the utilization of a mixed methods approach. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) argue that mixed methods designs offset limitations inherent when qualitative and quantitative approaches are used alone. For instance, quantitative research alone is deficient because it is typically weak in understanding the context or setting in which people live and participants voices are not directly heard, while qualitative research is deficient on its own because of the personal interpretations made by the researcher that impact ensuing bias and the difficulty of generalizing findings to larger groups. Therefore, a mixed methods research design can harness strengths of one approach to offset the weaknesses of the other (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). To address the triangulation rationale, the secondary, follow-up qualitative data was used to compare findings in the quantitative data and identify and explain points of convergence and divergence in results. Complementarity was used to develop a more complete understanding of the phenomenon of homelessness as it relates to support services utilization in school-aged youth through the asking and answering of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research questions. The development rationale was addressed through the sequential implementation of first the quantitative strand followed

by the qualitative strand to further explain initial quantitative results. Lastly, social justice was addressed by selecting a transformative, critical theory research paradigm to frame the study, guide inquiry, and facilitate systemic change.

To ensure the present study qualifies as mixed methods research, all seven of the essential characteristics identified by Guetterman et al. (2020) were referenced and are identifiable in the present study's methods. To best address the research purpose, both quantitative and qualitative strands are presented in a sequential order, while a holistic approach to data collection and analysis will also be utilized. Furthermore, the research methods have been developed to best address the research questions through a fixed, yet complex mixed methods research design, as demonstrated by the pre-determined decision to pursue an explanatory sequential core design within the framework of a multiple case study at the forefront of the study's conceptualization (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Lastly, integrated reporting was accomplished by explicitly interrelating the quantitative and qualitative components of the study (Guetterman et al., 2020; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016).

In this explanatory sequential study design, the quantitative findings in phase one were used to modify and inform the research tools utilized in the latter phases of data collection. Data integration of the quantitative and qualitative strands was achieved using the two most common integration approaches: combining and connecting (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). In phases one and two of the research, the quantitative and qualitative methods are connected as results from the quantitative phase were used to inform some of the procedures of the secondary, qualitative phase. Then in phase three, with the completion of data collection and analysis, both the quantitative and qualitative sets of

results were combined through joint interpretation and joint displays while formulating an action plan for each district.

Despite the extensive advantages of a mixed methods study design, there are several drawbacks that were examined and considered prior to solidifying the study methods. Yin (2018) argued that by mere definition, mixed methods studies are more difficult to execute than studies employing a single method. As a result, because conducting a multiple-case study can require additional resources and time, those aspects were taken into careful consideration prior to the onset of the study.

Case Study Sub Approach

The decision to intersect a case study design into the present mixed methods study was made because a case study approach is one of the most flexible approaches to qualitative research (Collins & Stockton, 2018) and is also a natural fit for mixed methods research because it can provide an in-depth, real life example for an issue that is studied quantitatively (Guetterman et al., 2020). The overall aim was to conduct an in-depth examination of a particular set of cases (Lichtman, 2013) while pursuing a detailed understanding of bounded cases (Guetterman et al., 2020). When designing a case study, Hatch (2002) emphasized that deciding how to bound the case study in addition to identifying the units of analysis are the key decisions that must be made at the onset of the study. Although data collection and analysis procedures in case studies are very similar to those found in the other major approaches, it is the “bounded systems” that makes case studies unique (Smith, 1979 as cited in Hatch, 2002, p.30). Cases may be bound by location, timeframe, or specific individuals (Creswell & Poth, 2018) or be limited to a particular characteristic, traits, behaviors, or situations (Lichtman, 2013). In

the present study, the cases, or entities, being investigated were three PreK-12 public school districts, and the function being investigated is support services for homeless students. The three cases were bounded by location: three public school districts in the American Midwest, as well as the individuals involved: homeless education liaisons and HHM students. Yin (2018) stated that a case study design may be an advantageous approach for a researcher if the research design targets the following three criteria: (a) a “how” or “why” question is being asked, (b) about a contemporary set of events, (c) over which a researcher has little or no control (p.13). The “how” question being answered in the present study is: How does having access to support services both within the school district and out in the larger community impact HHM student performance on state standardized assessments in ELA, Mathematics, and the ACT? The contemporary phenomenon that warrants investigation is increasing rates of youth homelessness in the United States, and because this study is not set up using an experimental or quasi-experimental design, this is an indication that there is little to no control or manipulation of the events being studied.

Moreover, a case study approach was believed to be the best fit for this research study because the end goal was to empower individuals to act, and typically, that is an indication of when a qualitative design is more advantageous (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Although there is debate among scholars when it comes to whether case study research is actually a method or methodology, this study views case study research as a methodology, representing the case study as both “an object of study as well as a product of the inquiry” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p.96). Based on the focus and intent of this study, a collective case study sub approach of three typical cases was selected (Lichtman, 2013).

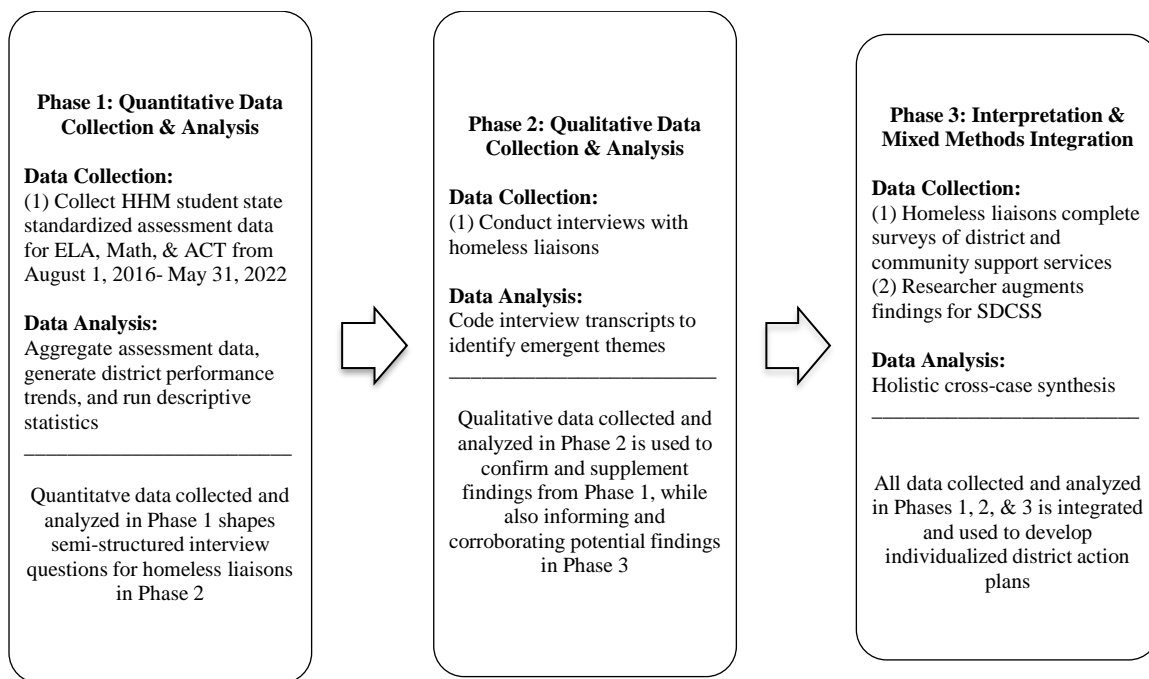
Together, the three individual cases form a “quintain” for which the shared phenomenon will be studied in a multicase study (Stake, 2006, p.6). Although the primary objective is to understand the quintain as a whole, that cannot be achieved without first understanding each individual case in detail as well as identifying the similarities and differences between the single cases. First, comparable amounts of time will be spent in each district compiling student assessment data, conducting interviews, and completing surveys of district and community support services prior to completing any analysis and drawing comparisons to piece together the bigger picture of the three districts. Then, equal attention will be given to both the quintain and each individual case as the transition is made from within-case to cross-case analysis.

Of the six main sources of evidence commonly found in case study research according to Yin (2018), the present study incorporates two: documentation and interviews. Documentation includes state standardized assessment records as well as documentation of support services available both within each of the schools/districts and their surrounding communities. The bulk of the qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews with homeless education liaisons (see Appendix B), while being supplemented by the survey of district and community support services (see Appendix C) completed as a collaboration between the homeless liaison and the researcher.

Study Design

The present explanatory sequential mixed methods case study was designed using a triphasic data collection and analysis model, with embedded points of quantitative and qualitative data integration (see Figure 1). In phase one, HHM student performance on

ELA, Mathematics, and ACT state standardized assessments administered between August 1, 2016 and May 31, 2022 were gathered and aggregated, performance trends for each district were generated, and descriptive statistics were ran. In phase two, homeless education liaisons from each district were interviewed and transcripts were coded to identify emergent themes. In phase three, surveys of district and community support services (SDCSS) were completed in order to quantify and catalog all existing support services both within districts and the surrounding community that are currently available to HHM students. The findings from the quantitative data gathered in phase one were then used to inform the qualitative phase of data collection and analysis in phase two by formulating a portion of the semi-structured interview questions for homeless liaisons based on the findings regarding their district's performance trends. The interview responses from homeless education liaisons were then used to inform and confirm the findings in the SDCSS. The third, and final phase included the interpretation and integration of all quantitative and qualitative data, which was holistically utilized to create individualized action plans for each district. The final mixed methods results were presented using a joint display.

Figure 1*Triphasic Data Collection and Analysis Model***Population**

Yin (2018) recommended having at least two cases for a case study in order to curb criticisms surrounding single-case studies and the fears regarding uniqueness or artifactual conditions surrounding the case and strengthen the researcher's ability to do empirical work. Discretionary, not formulaic, judgment was used to determine the number of case replication that were ideal for the study, and therefore, the decision to include three cases in the comparative, multiple case study, was made. Yin posited that having at least a "two-case" case study enhances the chances of direct replication and thus, the ensuing analytic conclusions independently arising from the separate cases become more powerful (p.61). Therefore, three districts were selected for the present explanatory sequential mixed methods case study: (a) District Alpha- a rural PK-12 public school district on an American Indian Reservation, (b) District Beta- a public PK-

12 school district that serves a rural area, and (c) District Gamma- a public PK-12 district that serves an urbanized area.

District Alpha

District Alpha is a PK-12 public school district on an American Indian Reservation. The NCES (2019) locale lookup tool classified this district as “Rural, Distant.” Total student enrollment for the 2021-2022 SY was 621 students, up from 593 five years prior in 2016-2017. Approximately 91% of the students enrolled for the 2021-22 school year identified as American Indian or Alaska Native, but back in 2016-17 that number was 86%. The percentage of students identified as highly mobile for 2021-22 in the district was 6.09%, which is down from the 10.77% reported in 2016-17. For SY 2017-18, the most recent year with new state standardized assessments aligned to the state’s College and Career Ready standards for both ELA and Mathematics, 18% of all student participants were proficient on the Mathematics assessment, compared to 20% of all students achieving proficiency on the ELA assessment ([State] Department of Education, 2021-2022b). For the 2021-22 SY, District Alpha saw their district-wide proficiency percentage decrease in both ELA and Mathematics to 14% and 12%, respectively, as shown in Table 1 ([State] Department of Education, 2021a).

District Beta

District Beta is a PK-12 public district that serves a rural area. The NCES (2019) locale lookup tool classified this district as “Rural, Distant.” Its total student enrollment for SY 2021-22 was 441, with 325 (or 74%) of the students identifying as White and the rest identifying as students of color or students of two or more races. Although total student enrollment for 2016-2017 was less, 394 students, the percentage of students

identifying as White was about the same (74%). The percentage of students identified as highly mobile in the district rose from 3.42% in 2016-17 to 7.46% in 2021-22. During the 2017-18 SY, new state standardized assessments aligned to the state's College and Career Ready standards were first administered for both ELA and Mathematics, and 51% of all student participants in District Beta were proficient in ELA compared to 52% of all students achieving proficiency on the Mathematics assessment. However, for SY 2021-22, proficiency on that assessment decreased for Mathematics to 45%, while increasing slightly for the ELA assessment to 53%, as shown in Table 1 ([State] Department of Education, 2021-2022a).

District Gamma

The NCES (2019) locale classification for district Gamma is "City, Small." Total PK-12 student enrollment for the 2021-22 SY was 15,121 up from 14,893 in 2016-17. In 2021-22, the total population of students identified as White was 6453, or 43%, compared to 7604, or 51%, in 2016-17, with the remainder of all other students identifying as students of color or students of more than one race ([State] Department of Education, 2017; 2021c). A district average of the 2017-18 state Reading assessment data for District Gamma for all students tested for grades 3-8, 10, and 11, revealed 71% of all participating students scored proficient or above when proficiency scores across participating grade levels were averaged out. Using the same method of calculation, the proficiency level for the state Mathematics assessment for 2017-18 for all participating students in District Gamma was approximately 70% ([State] Department of Education, 2017-2018). For SY 2021-22, the percentage of students achieving proficiency on the ELA assessment fell to approximately 61%, while the percentage of students achieving

proficiency on the Mathematics assessment fell to 54% ([State] Department of Education, 2022). For a snapshot comparing all three districts regarding total student enrollment, mobility percentages, and assessment proficiency, refer to Table 1.

Table 1

Districts Alpha, Beta, and Gamma Snapshot Comparisons

District	2016-17	2021-22	2016-17	2021-22	2017-18	2021-22	2017-18	2021-22
	Total	Total	Highly	Highly	Math	Math	ELA	ELA
	Enroll- ment	Enroll- ment	Mobile %	Mobile %	Profic- ient %	Profic- ient %	Profic- ient %	Profic- ient %
Alpha	593	621	10.77	6.09	18	12	20	14
Beta	394	441	3.42	7.46	52	45	51	53
Gamma	14,893	15,121	-	-	70	54	71 ^a	61

Note. Rates of mobility for District Gamma were not reported on their State Department of Education’s web page.

^a 2017-18 ELA assessment data for District Gamma is labeled as “Reading” instead of “ELA” on their State Department of Education’s web page.

Sample

From each of the three districts selected for this bounded case study, one homeless education liaison participated in the individual interview portion of the study. Therefore, the target sample size for the bounded case study was three individuals: one homeless liaison from each of the three districts. Using a purposeful sampling approach, the individual with the job title of homeless education liaison or the individual whose primary responsibilities include coordinating and providing services for HHM students in their district, was recruited to participate in an interview as well as complete the SDCSS. Purposeful sampling was chosen as the best fit for recruiting faculty participants because

this study targeted those individuals who work most intimately and most frequently with HHM students regarding the coordination and provision of support services.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted in a triphasic format. During phase one, at the onset of the study, state standardized assessment scores in ELA, Mathematics, as well as ACT composite scores for assessments administered between August 1, 2016 through May 31, 2022 for all students identified as HHM from all three districts was collected. Afterward, assessment data was aggregated and descriptive statistics were performed on each district in order to identify overall trends of HHM student performance over the designated time frame. Prior to the researcher's receipt of the assessment data, all identifiable information and duplicate records were removed and coded by the district, if necessary. Member checking with faculty/staff participants following the formulation and interpretation of aggregated scores and assessment data trends concluded phase one of data collection with faculty verifying accuracy of analysis and portrayal of conclusions.

Following the examination of HHM student state standardized assessment scores, phase two commenced with the interview portion with homeless education liaisons from all three districts. The bulk of the qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews with one homeless education liaison from each district. The interviews with homeless education liaisons occurred on-site and in person, in a private location, and each lasted approximately 30-60 minutes. Liaisons were asked to come back for a member checking session approximately one week after their interview to verify accuracy of responses and transcriptions. All interviews were recorded using a digital

audio voice recorder and were manually transcribed by the researcher using the intelligent verbatim transcription method.

The third, and final phase of data collection required the completion of a survey of district and community support services by each homeless liaison (SDCSS). The intent of the SDCSS was to request homeless liaisons take inventory of the quantity of support services available to HHM students both within the school/district as well as out in the community and to create a comprehensive list of those services to be utilized as a resource by the district. This survey was first completed by the homeless liaisons and was subsequently augmented by the researcher's findings. The homeless education liaisons completed the SDCSS first because they were regarded as the resident expert on the services available to HHM students within the school/district, and it was assumed they likely would be better informed of the services available in the surrounding community as well. Following the liaison's completion of the SDCSS, it was the researcher's responsibility to conduct an extensive search to determine any and all available services for HHM students out in the surrounding community to build upon what the homeless education liaison had previously compiled. Data collection and analysis in phase three concluded with a final round of member checking with homeless liaisons to verify the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the final draft of the SDCSS.

At the conclusion of all data collection and analysis in phase three, together with the homeless education liaison, the researcher facilitated the development of an action plan for the district built upon the emergent findings across all three phases. Although data collection occurred in three distinct phases, there were multiple embedded points of overlap between the data collection process and the analysis portion as each preceding

phase informed and dictated aspects of subsequent phases. Particularly after the collection of the quantitative data in phase one, some data analysis and interpretation was required in order to proceed to the qualitative portions of data collection in phases two and three. Likewise, it was essential that analysis of interview transcripts in phase two occurred prior to proceeding to phase three of data collection to accurately confirm and supplement previous findings from participants' responses.

Data Analysis

Once the data was collected for all three phases across all three cases, a holistic, cross-case synthesis analytic technique resembling a case-based approach was utilized in order to “retain the integrity of the entire case and then to compare or synthesize any within-case patterns across cases” (Yin, 2018, p.196). In cross-case synthesis, highlighting similarities while also providing plausible rival interpretations for dissimilarities and oddities among multiple-case studies allows for the development of strong, plausible, and fair arguments supported by the evidence gathered (Yin, 2018). First, an analysis of case themes was completed to identify themes that transcend the cases. Subsequently, within-case analysis was completed, where rich descriptions of the individual cases and thematic elements were identified in each individual case prior to completing a cross-case analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data triangulation was used to confirm the findings from the state standardized assessment scores, interviews, and the SDCSS for each case. Member checks were incorporated throughout each phase to not only provide participants with an opportunity to confirm the findings and ensure the accuracy of the interpretation of data, but to also share power and build relationships between the researcher and participants all throughout the research process. Descriptive

statistics of assessment data were computed using SPSS software (see Appendix D) to compare HHM student performance within and across cases. Qualitative data was coded through a variety of lenses, filters and angles using MAXQDA software (see Appendix E), and subsequent emergent themes were then identified for each individual case. Cross-case analysis was then performed, and data integration was achieved through the inclusion of a joint display where findings within and across cases were presented. Finally, findings were debriefed with critical peers to ensure the analysis was accurately grounded in the data.

CHAPTER IV. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Overview

The following chapter will describe the case study results and findings following data collection and analysis for all three cases in the case study. In the quantitative phase, state standardized assessment data for HHM students in each district was aggregated, longitudinal performance trends were identified, descriptive statistics were provided, and comparisons across districts were made. For the qualitative phase, interview transcripts with homeless liaisons in conjunction with surveys of district and community support services were analyzed and coded to identify seven emergent themes using a variety of methods including memoing, In Vivo Coding, Descriptive Coding, and Values Coding. Lastly, the results and findings from both the quantitative and qualitative strands were integrated, and findings were utilized to create individualized action plans for each district with the goal of increasing access to support services for HHM students and consequently, future performance on state standardized assessments as well.

Quantitative Results

Performance Trends

Although six years of HHM student state standardized assessment data administered between August 1, 2016- May 31, 2022 was requested from each district, District Alpha was able to provide three years of assessment data; 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2021-22, District Beta provided two years; 2018-19 and 2020-21, and District Gamma provided three years; 2018-19, 2020-21, and 2021-22 (see Table 2). The data stewards for Districts Alpha and Beta both stated that because State reporting systems switched in 2017 and 2018, respectively, they were unable to retrieve assessment data prior to those

years. District Gamma’s data steward stated that because the State administered a new assessment during the 2018-19 SY, the district was unable to retrieve assessment data prior to that year. Additionally, all districts did not assess their students during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic (2019-20 SY) during the spring testing session, as they were granted a waiver by the U.S. Department of Education to forgo mandated testing, so test scores were non-existent for that year across all three districts (Gewertz, 2020). In some instances across all three districts, some demographic information on HHM students for particular years and testing sessions was provided but their assessment scores were absent.

Table 2

Total HHM Students with Assessment Data by District

School Year	Alpha		Beta		Gamma	
	Students Identified	Scores Provided	Students Identified	Scores Provided	Students Identified	Scores Provided
2016-17 SY	-	0	-	0	-	0
2017-18 SY	14	14	-	0	-	0
2018-19 SY	5	5	21	3	561	561
2019-20 SY	-	0	20	0	-	0
2020-21 SY	-	0	29	10	566	564
2021-22 SY	13	13	-	0	1004	1003

Note. The same student may be represented more than once in the count because they may have reported scores across multiple years.

First, assessment and student demographic data was used to create overall trends for each district for state standardized assessments administered between August 1, 2016 and May 31, 2022. Table 3 illustrates high and low scores, scoring averages, and proficiency rates for each assessment type in each district.

Table 3*Assessment Score Ranges, Averages, and Proficiency by District*

District	2017-18 SY			2018-19			2020-21			2021-22		
	ELA	Math	ACT	ELA	Math	ACT	ELA	Math	ACT	ELA	Math	ACT
Alpha							-	-	-			
High Score	2552	1221	16	-	-	13				2519	2334	16
Low Score	2321	1089	12	-	-	12				1105	1050	12
Average	2463	1164	13.6	-	-	12.8				2309	1287	13.6
Proficiency	9%	0%	-	-	-	-				10%	30%	-
Beta	-	-	-							-	-	-
High Score				2562	1276	-	2601	1220	14			
Low Score				2457	1152	-	2307	1078	13			
Average				2509	1214	-	2441	1138	13.5			
Proficiency				50%	50%	-	25%	0%	0%			
Gamma	-	-	-									
High Score				681	675	-	680	702	-	726	720	-
Low Score				359	305	-	354	359	-	356	356	-
Average				458	459	-	457	454	-	471	463	-
Proficiency				41%	42%	-	42%	37%	-	46%	36%	-

Note. All ELA and Math averages and proficiency percentages were rounded down to the nearest whole number. Dashes indicate those districts did not provide assessment data for those particular years and/or categories.

As evidenced by Table 3, Districts Alpha and Gamma were able to provide HHM student state standardized assessment data for three years while District Beta was able to provide it for two years. At a quick glance of District Alpha's trends it was noted that the percentage of students scoring either proficient or advanced on the ELA assessment increased slightly from 2017-18 to 2021-22 from 9% to 10%, while proficiency on the Math assessment increased substantially from 0% to 30%. Although proficiency percentages were not recorded for the ACT composite score data, the average ACT composite score did increase from 12.8 in SY 2018-19 to 13.6 in SY 2021-22. As

previously stated in Table 2; however, District Alpha's sample size was extremely small, with trends based on a reported total of 14 scores for 2017-18, five scores for 2018-19, and 13 scores for 2021-22.

District Beta provided two years of HHM state standardized assessment data, one year prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and one year post, and the proficiency rates between the years indicated a significant drop in proficiency, decreasing from 50% for both ELA and Math in 2018-19, down to 25% in ELA and 0% in Math two years later. Average scores in both ELA and Math decreased over that time span while ACT proficiency in 2020-21 was 0%. Referencing Table 2, District Beta's trends were based off reported data for a total of three HHM students in 2018-19 and 10 students in 2020-21.

District Gamma provided three years of assessment data for SY 2018-19, 2020-21 and 2021-22. Some interesting findings to note are that ELA proficiency percentages were lowest for the district for SY 2018-19 (41%), but increased the first year post COVID-19 to 42% and continued to increase the following year to 46%. Math proficiency trends were the exact inverse as they were highest in 2018-19 at 42% but decreased in 2020-21 to 37% and continued to decline in 2021-22 to 36%. However, it is also worthwhile to mention that despite the decreases in Math proficiency rates over the years, both the average scores and high scores for both ELA and Math were highest in 2021-22. When observing in conjunction with HHM rates displayed in Table 2, this particular finding may be explained by the fact that District Gamma saw their rates of HHM students nearly double, jumping from 566 students in 2020-21 to 1,004 just one year later in 2021-22.

Descriptive Statistics

After assessment trends were generated, descriptive statistics were then run on all three districts. Due to extremely small sample sizes for Districts Alpha and Beta, HHM student assessment data was jointly entered into SPSS for those two districts while District Gamma's assessment data was entered into a separate file. Refer to Table 4 for the descriptive statistics output for Districts Alpha and Beta and Table 5 for District Gamma's.

Table 4

Alpha and Beta Descriptive Statistics

District	Year	Variable	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Alpha	2017-18	District ID	14	.00	1.00	1.00	1.0000	.00000
		Assessment Year	14	.00	2.00	2.00	2.0000	.00000
		Student Label	14	13.00	71.00	84.00	77.5000	4.18330
		ELA Score	11	231.00	2321.00	2552.00	2463.6364	79.42704
		Math Score	11	132.00	1089.00	1221.00	1164.7273	53.31246
		ACT Composite Score	3	4.00	12.00	16.00	13.6667	2.08167
		ELA Proficiency	11	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.9091	.30151
		Math Proficiency	11	.00	2.00	2.00	2.0000	.00000
		ACT Proficiency	0					
		Grade	14	8.00	3.00	11.00	6.7857	2.91359
		Sex	14	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.2857	.46881
		Race	14	.00	4.00	4.00	4.0000	.00000
		Current District Services 2023	14	.00	10.00	10.00	10.0000	.00000
		District & Community Services	14	.00	25.00	25.00	25.0000	.00000
		Valid N (listwise)	0					
Alpha	2018-19	District ID	5	.00	1.00	1.00	1.0000	.00000
		Assessment Year	5	.00	3.00	3.00	3.0000	.00000
		Student Label	5	4.00	85.00	89.00	87.0000	1.58114
		ELA Score	0					
		Math Score	0					

		Variable	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
		ACT Composite Score	5	1.00	12.00	13.00	12.8000	.44721
		ELA Proficiency	0					
		Math Proficiency	0					
		ACT Proficiency	0					
		Grade	5	.00	11.00	11.00	11.0000	.00000
		Sex	5	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.4000	.54772
		Race	5	.00	4.00	4.00	4.0000	.00000
		Current District	5	.00	10.00	10.00	10.0000	.00000
		Services 2023						
		District & Community	5	.00	25.00	25.00	25.0000	.00000
		Services						
		Valid N (listwise)	0					
2021-		District ID	13	.00	1.00	1.00	1.0000	.00000
22		Assessment Year	13	.00	6.00	6.00	6.0000	.00000
		Student Label	13	12.00	90.00	102.00	96.0000	3.89444
		ELA Score	10	1414.00	1105.00	2519.00	2309.4000	427.10321
		Math Score	10	1284.00	1050.00	2334.00	1287.4000	375.91731
		ACT Composite Score	3	4.00	12.00	16.00	13.6667	2.08167
		ELA Proficiency	10	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.9000	.31623
		Math Proficiency	10	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.7000	.48305
		ACT Proficiency	0					
		Grade	13	8.00	3.00	11.00	6.4615	2.96129
		Sex	13	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.5385	.51887
		Race	13	.00	4.00	4.00	4.0000	.00000
		Current District	13	.00	10.00	10.00	10.0000	.00000
		Services 2023						
		District & Community	13	.00	25.00	25.00	25.0000	.00000
		Services						
		Valid N (listwise)	0					
Beta	2018-	District ID	21	.00	2.00	2.00	2.0000	.00000
	19	Assessment Year	21	.00	3.00	3.00	3.0000	.00000
		Student Label	21	20.00	1.00	21.00	11.0000	6.20484
		ELA Score	2	105.00	2457.00	2562.00	2509.5000	74.24621
		Math Score	2	124.00	1152.00	1276.00	1214.0000	87.68124
		ACT Composite Score	0					
		ELA Proficiency	2	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.5000	.70711
		Math Proficiency	2	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.5000	.70711
		ACT Proficiency	0					
		Grade	21	12.00	1.00	13.00	7.8095	4.38884

	Variable	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Sex	21	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.6667	.48305
	Race	21	6.00	1.00	7.00	3.3333	2.95522
	Current District Services 2023	21	.00	11.00	11.00	11.0000	.00000
	District & Community Services	21	.00	15.00	15.00	15.0000	.00000
	Valid N (listwise)	0					
2019-	District ID	20	.00	2.00	2.00	2.0000	.00000
20	Assessment Year	20	.00	4.00	4.00	4.0000	.00000
	Student Label	20	19.00	22.00	41.00	31.5000	5.91608
	ELA Score	0					
	Math Score	0					
	ACT Composite Score	0					
	ELA Proficiency	0					
	Math Proficiency	0					
	ACT Proficiency	0					
	Grade	20	12.00	1.00	13.00	6.3000	3.57035
	Sex	20	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.7500	.44426
	Race	20	3.00	1.00	4.00	3.3000	1.08094
	Current District Services 2023	20	.00	11.00	11.00	11.0000	.00000
	District & Community Services	20	.00	15.00	15.00	15.0000	.00000
	Valid N (listwise)	0					
2020-	District ID	29	.00	2.00	2.00	2.0000	.00000
21	Assessment Year	29	.00	5.00	5.00	5.0000	.00000
	Student Label	29	28.00	42.00	70.00	56.0000	8.51469
	ELA Score	8	294.00	2307.00	2601.00	2441.3750	103.10180
	Math Score	8	142.00	1078.00	1220.00	1138.1250	51.05022
	ACT Composite Score	2	1.00	13.00	14.00	13.5000	.70711
	ELA Proficiency	8	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.7500	.46291
	Math Proficiency	8	.00	2.00	2.00	2.0000	.00000
	ACT Proficiency	2	.00	2.00	2.00	2.0000	.00000
	Grade	29	12.00	1.00	13.00	6.7586	4.16323
	Sex	29	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.6207	.49380
	Race	29	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.0000	1.62569
	Current District Services 2023	29	.00	11.00	11.00	11.0000	.00000

Variable	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
District & Community Services	29	.00	15.00	15.00	15.0000	.00000
Valid N (listwise)	0					

Table 5*Gamma Descriptive Statistics*

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Assessment Year	2131	3	3	6	4.94	1.234
Student Label	2131	84897	963	85860	66448.45	11598.973
ELA Score	2124	372	354	726	464.33	62.812
Math Score	2125	415	305	720	460.18	59.018
ELA Proficiency	2131	1	1	2	1.56	.496
Math Proficiency	2131	1	1	2	1.62	.485
Grade	2131	9	3	12	6.69	2.523
Sex	2131	2	1	3	1.54	.517
Race	2131	6	1	7	2.25	1.958
Current District Services 2023	2131	.00	18.00	18.00	18.0000	.00000
District & Community Services	2131	.00	155.00	155.00	155.0000	.00000
Valid N (listwise)	2121					

Districts Alpha and Beta were assigned a numerical District ID value to differentiate them in the SPSS data. For the District ID variable, District Alpha=1 and District Beta=2. District Gamma did not require a District ID variable because it was input into a separate SPSS file, so there was no need to distinguish one district from another. The Assessment Year variable was then created to denote which year of assessment data was input. A value of 1 was assigned for SY 2016-17, a 2 for 2017-18, a 3 for 2018-19, a 4 for 2019-20, a 5 for 2020-21, and a 6 for 2021-22. A Student Label variable was then added where a unique numerical value to denote each student was input (the value was either created by the district or assigned by the researcher) simply used to

differentiate one student's assessment data from the next because no identifying information such as student name or school ID number were permitted to be gathered. Next, ELA Score, Math Score, and ACT Composite Score variables were created, where assessment scores received from districts were input directly into applicable columns. Variables for ELA Proficiency, Math Proficiency, and ACT proficiency were then added and students were assigned either a 1=Proficient or Advanced, or 2=Not Proficient, based on proficiency rates provided by the districts. Some demographic information for students was also collected, and relevant variables of Grade, Sex, and Race were created. For Grade, students were assigned a value ranging from 1-14, with 1-12 matching their respective grade levels First grade through Twelfth grade, with a value of 13 representing Kindergarten and 14 representing Pre-K. For the Sex variable, 1=Male, 2=Female, and 3= N/A or Unknown. The Race variable included values 1-7, with 1=White, 2=Black/African American, 3=Hispanic, 4=Native American/Pacific Islander, 5=Asian, 6=Multiracial, and 7=N/A or Unknown. For Districts Alpha and Beta, their categories for Race aligned with the categories created in SPSS by the researcher but for District Gamma, students that were labeled as either Native American or Pacific Islander by the district were grouped together under Native American/Pacific Islander=4, while students labeled as Biracial by the district were grouped under Multiracial=6. Lastly, two variables to quantify the number of support services currently offered by each district as well as a combination of current district and community services were created, Current District Services and District & Community Services, respectively, and a numerical value was then input into each service category based on the total count of support services currently available to HHM students. For District Alpha, the value input for current

district services 2023 was 10 while total district and community support services was 25, in District Beta those values were 11 and 15, whereas District Gamma's values were 18 and 155, respectively. The quantity of services for both predictors remained constant for all HHM students with assessment data because it was assumed that all HHM students had equal access to the services available in each district and the community.

The descriptive statistics from Tables 4 and 5 summarize the *N* value, the minimum and maximum values assigned for each variable, as well as range, mean, and standard deviation values. Although some information in Tables 4 and 5 is repeated from previous Tables 2 and 3, the descriptive statistics tables are useful for determining *N* values, or total HHM students, per district, broken down by year and assessment type, total quantities of support services currently available in each district and its immediate surrounding community, as well as minimum, maximum, range and standard deviation values for selected variables. While the total *N* for District Alpha=32, District Beta=70, and District Gamma=2,131, due to heavily fragmented data in Districts Alpha and Beta, there were 0 valid *N* for both Districts Alpha and Beta, while 2,121 entries were valid for District Gamma.

Across all three districts, for variables of ELA Score and Math Score, the score range was large, typically in the hundreds, or even in the thousands, as was the case in District Alpha for both content areas in SY 2021-22. Standard deviation values for ELA Score and Math Score variables were high as well— anywhere between 51 and 427. The wide score ranges and high standard deviation values indicated substantial variability in assessment performance across HHM populations within each district. But because the districts are not all located in the same state, comparing values across districts becomes

problematic. Moreover, because the state standardized assessment changed within the requested time frame of assessment data in all districts, comparing means and standard deviations before and after that change is not entirely beneficial either, assuming scale scores and achievement levels were adjusted when the assessment changed. Proficiency rates, however, can be compared across all years and all districts, with values closest to 2 indicate fewer students scored proficient/advanced on that particular assessment for a particular district and year.

Valuable information revealed through phase one in the quantitative strand regarding mobility rates, HHM assessment performance over time, and the differences in support services provided ample evidence to develop general trends and patterns relating to HHM students' performance in each district. The subsequent qualitative findings from interviews with homeless liaisons and SDCSS served to bolster the quantitative results and not only add context for why these districts are seeing some of these trends for HHM students, but also how they envision improving outcomes for HHM students in specific areas in the future.

Qualitative Findings

MAXQDA software was used to code qualitative data including interview transcripts with homeless liaisons and surveys of district and community support services (SDCSS). A variety of coding methods for analysis of interview transcripts and SDCSS were utilized through first cycle and second cycle coding. In Vivo Coding was utilized to preserve the data in the participant's own language, while a combination of Descriptive Coding, Values Coding, and memoing were used to capture, categorize, and label the varying subjective opinions of each participant- as is appropriate when implementing a

critical theory framework (Saldaña, 2021). Per the triphasic data collection and analysis model presented at the forefront of the study, interviews with homeless liaisons were conducted in phase two, after the collection of HHM student state standardized assessment data. The analysis resulting from the assessment data was then used to inform and shape some of the semi-structured interview questions asked in the homeless liaison interviews. The information gleaned in phase two was then used to supplement and corroborate the information provided in phase three during the completion of the SDCSS, mixed methods integration, and the subsequent formulation of individualized action plans for each district.

Cross-case Analysis: Emergent Themes

A cross-case synthesis analytic technique (Yin, 2018) was utilized to code the qualitative data received in phases two and three by forming a more complete picture of each individual case through rich descriptions first, followed by identifying within-case patterns that transcended cases to also complete cross-case analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). When coding interview transcripts and SDCSS, the goal was to highlight similarities while also providing explanations for dissimilarities or outliers within the data, supported by evidence (Yin, 2018).

Through coding of interview transcripts and surveys of district and community support services with homeless liaisons in each district, seven themes emerged following analysis and synthesis of the qualitative data: (1) What it means to be a homeless education liaison 2) How definitions both limit and expand eligibility for services, (3) The impact of funding on support services, (4) How HHM rates differ longitudinally and across districts, (5) How districts track HHM students, (6) The variability in HHM

student assessment performance, and (7) Comparing support services within districts and across communities. In the interviews, homeless liaison's names were replaced with pseudonyms to ensure anonymity of participants and districts.

Theme 1: What it Means to be a Homeless Education Liaison

The first emergent theme through cross-case analysis of interview transcripts with homeless liaisons from all three districts was the role that homeless liaisons occupy in their districts and the execution of their job responsibilities when it comes to serving their HHM students. Although one individual was the designated homeless liaison in each district, it was a common theme across districts that it was no one's exclusive job title and therefore, each individual wore multiple hats and had additional responsibilities beyond the scope of being the homeless liaison. For instance, in both of the smaller rural districts, Alpha and Beta, the Superintendent of the district also doubled as the homeless education liaison. The Superintendent from District Alpha, Mr. Appleton, is a veteran administrator, having served in his position for 14 years. Mr. Bronx from District Beta also stated, "[He] is the liaison coordinator as the Superintendent" and has occupied his current role for 6 years. While in the larger suburban district, Gamma, the homeless liaison's formal job title was: Director of Student Services and Equity Education, which she has possessed for two years. Mrs. Glendale from district Gamma further explained: "The district does not employ a homeless liaison. I am the designated homeless liaison. So it is within my duties to identify the students and provide services."

The fact that no one's exclusive focus was directed toward serving their HHM students is significant because it implies that although each district assigned a designated individual as a homeless liaison, it was considered a part-time job across the board. Even

in District Gamma, which serves considerably more HHM students than either Alpha or Beta, the responsibilities designated under the homeless liaison title were expected to be fulfilled on a part-time basis. The part-time nature of the homeless liaison position in all districts surveyed implies these individuals are able to meet the needs of their HHM student populations while also addressing additional responsibilities related to their formal job titles.

Also of note, although the homeless liaison position is technically a part-time job designated to just one individual in each district, each homeless liaison later described being part of a team of individuals that work together to serve their HHM student population. In District Alpha, Mr. Appleton identified the school counselor in addition to “a group that meets on a regular basis from the community” as instituted in the Memorandum of Agreements with Tribal entities, as individuals who actively participate in the coordinating of services for HHM students, if the need should arise. In District Beta, Mr. Bronx identified principals, guidance counselors, school psychologists, Special Education teachers, and grade-level teachers as potential individuals that may be asked to assist in serving HHM students. Meanwhile, District Gamma currently provides training for office personnel, teachers, paraprofessionals, principals, and staff to identify potential homeless students and refer them to the homeless liaison for services. Additionally, family liaisons, family support coordinators, interpreters, and even individuals in the finance department (if applicable) may also be asked to assist in identifying potential HHM students and ensuring they have adequate access to a wide-range of services they may require in District Gamma.

Theme 2: How Definitions Both Limit and Expand Eligibility for Services

The second theme that emerged through interview transcript analysis was regarding the definitions utilized by each district when determining which students meet the definition of being *homeless* or *highly mobile*. Determining exact definitions for these terms is critical because definitions can be used to both limit and expand the threshold of which students meet eligibility requirements for support services and which do not. Mr. Appleton from District Alpha stated that his district defers to their state's definitions for *homeless* and *highly mobile* and illustrated that as "anybody that doesn't have a permanent home," or "students that move in and out multiple times," respectively. When asked where those definitions are explicitly located, Mr. Appleton stated that the definition for *homeless* is located in their "policies and procedures," but was unable to definitively say where one could reference the district's definition for *highly mobile*. To obtain a more concrete definition for how the district identifies HHM students in state standardized assessment data, the data steward was asked to provide the parameters they utilized when retrieving the requested HHM assessment data. District Alpha's data steward pulled state standardized assessment data for students that the district considered highly mobile, which they defined as: "re-enrollees, first time enrollees, [not Kindergartners] and intra-state transfers" (personal communication, March 8, 2023). The data steward further stated that there was no distinguishing between homeless and highly mobile students in the assessment data, so it was probable that students identified as homeless were also represented in the assessment data for highly mobile students (personal communication, March 13, 2023).

When asked whether District Alpha could benefit from developing its own definitions for homeless and highly mobile, Mr. Appleton responded:

Our district, because of our culture and logistics, we never really identify a lot of kids as homeless. I'm sure we could if you went with the big definition. It's because a lot of our kids live with other relatives so sometimes it's really hard to identify being homeless versus being a student that lives with another sibling or relative.

Because District Alpha is located on an American Indian Reservation, the above quote offers some insight into why some HHM students might remain unidentified. This point illustrates the unique dynamic that exists between the federal government and public schools on Native American Reservations when the federal definition for homelessness by which all public school districts must adhere to, does not perfectly align with various cultural aspects surrounding kinship and non-nuclear family dynamics present in many Native cultures. Mr. Appleton is alluding to the fact that in his particular district, it may be more advantageous to develop specific definitions for *homeless* and *highly mobile* that are more culturally responsive and inclusive of social and cultural norms of the Tribe. Because of the differences in definitions of homeless, it is possible this may result in some hesitation or even confusion when families and districts are determining whether students meet requirements to be considered homeless.

While Mr. Bronx, for District Beta, stated that his district also follows their State's guidelines for defining students as *homeless*, he also mentioned the "informal nature" of the district's policies and procedures, which often accompany that designation. Mr. Bronx also stated that the attendance secretaries track students in and out on a

monthly basis to track the district's mobility rates but did not provide a concrete definition of the term or discuss where the district's definitions could be accessed. When the data steward was asked how she identified students' HHM status in the assessment data records, she stated that no students had been classified as *homeless* over the last four years, meaning all of District Beta's assessment data belonged to students designated as *highly mobile* only. The definition the district used to pull state standardized assessment data for *highly mobile* students was as follows: "list of all students, K-12, considered to be highly mobile reported at the district and school building level and school level reports that identify students by (a) intra-state transfers; (b) first time entrees; and (c) re-enrollees" (personal communication, May 11, 2022). It was noticed that District Beta's definition for *highly mobile* was nearly identical to District Alpha's, indicating there is some consensus across districts when defining high mobility.

When Mr. Bronx was asked whether his district could benefit from adding their own definitions for homeless and highly mobile, he responded:

I think we have our own definitions and procedures... we're not highly black and white and formalized in that... [but] at present, with the personnel we have and the procedures we use, I think we're in a pretty good position. Not saying that couldn't change in the future.

Mr. Bronx's response indicated satisfaction with the current state of definitions but also simultaneously acknowledges that his district is open to adapting their procedures if the opportunity arises in the future. On more than one occasion, Mr. Bronx used the terms: "anecdotal information," "informal nature", and "case-by-case basis" to describe the policies and procedures his district implements to address the unique situations that often

arise when identifying HHM students and coordinating services. His frequent use of these terms describing the district's policies and procedures and the gray area it sometimes operates in when it comes to serving HHM students, illustrates how specific solutions can be tailored based on unique circumstances, and he spoke of that as an advantage to being in a small, rural school.

In District Gamma, Mrs. Glendale stated that her district defers to the definition of *homeless* written into the McKinney-Vento Act (MVA, 2015) when designating students as such, and that the definition they use for *highly mobile* is: "two or more movements within a school year." Mrs. Glendale stated she believed the district's definition for homeless can be located on the district's website and the definition for *highly mobile* is likely there as well.

When the data steward from District Gamma provided HHM state standardized assessment data, he stated that HHM students on the list included any students which are living in either "(1) shelters/transitional housing, (2) doubled up, (3) unsheltered, or (4) hotel/motel." The definition the data steward used to determine assessment data belonging to highly mobile students was the same definition utilized in the present study, which defined *high mobility* as, "enrollment in 2 or more buildings in one year" (personal communication, October 17, 2022).

In contrast with the answers provided by Districts Alpha and Beta stating it may be advantageous for their districts to modify their definitions for *homeless* and *highly mobile*, Mrs. Glendale believed it would not be beneficial to the district because multiple definitions would create confusion and their definition needs to align with the McKinney-Vento Act because that is how funding for HHM students is allocated.

Theme 3: The Impact of Funding on Support Services

The third theme that emerged was related to funding and the impact that financial resources had on supporting HHM students in each district. Although each district stated that funding was a significant factor in the services they were able to provide to all students, only District Gamma reported receiving McKinney-Vento funding to support its HHM student population. Districts Alpha and Beta relied on allocated money from other parts of the district budget to meet the needs of their HHM students. Furthermore, while District Gamma claimed funds were insufficient to meet the needs of their HHM students, Mr. Bronx stated the opposite because money allocated to support HHM students typically remained unspent from year-to-year in District Beta.

Although District Beta does not receive any funds that flow through the State's Department of Education for homelessness, Mr. Bronx mentioned: "we have to designate, [in] our consolidated federal application... \$100 of that allocation which can go for Title I, Title II, Title IV, Title V services for homelessness." However, Mr. Bronx followed that up by saying it was rare the district utilized those funds and so it often carries over to the following year.

District Gamma allocated significantly more funding to serve its HHM student population, with Mrs. Glendale stating that since the 2016-17 SY, she estimated on an annual basis the district received between \$39-\$41 thousand in McKinney-Vento funding. When questioned whether that amount was sufficient to serve the district's HHM student population, she stated:

It does not cover all the cost. We also have Title I funding we use... right now we do have some ARP [American Rescue Plan] money... that came with the

pandemic as a relief... and when we don't have that it's going to go to the district funds.

Districts Beta and Gamma indicated that if and when the funding for HHM students falls short, there are other places from which funds can be acquired to fill the gaps including Title funds or COVID-19 pandemic relief funds.

As a follow up question, all homeless liaisons were asked whether their districts charge HHM students or their families for any of the support services they provide to them and all liaisons answered with a resounding, "No!" This demonstrates the immense financial burden each district assumes because they are able to provide a wide range of services ranging from free meals, to health care, mental health services, transportation, and clothing, at no cost to any of their students. So while Districts Alpha and Beta do not receive specific budget allocations for servicing their HHM students, it is evident that the services which they are able to provide free of charge serve all students, HHM included.

When homeless liaisons brainstormed ideas for their district's action plans, the theme of funding's impact on support services re-appeared in all three plans. So although the interview provided differing accounts across the districts regarding the impact that funding had on their ability to provide supports for HHM students, ironically, all homeless liaisons stressed the importance of funding when executing their action plans. In fact, all liaisons mentioned that in order for their action plans to come to fruition, funding would have to increase, or at least maintain current levels, at minimum. Without the required funding, the changes and programs each district aspired to add would not be possible.

Theme 4: How HHM Rates Differ Longitudinally and Across Districts

During the interviews with homeless liaisons, each liaison was presented with a copy of their district's HHM rates over the requested 6-year period, as provided by the district's data steward. Homeless liaisons were then asked to describe the HHM rates in their district and list what they believed were factors that contribute as well as any noticeable changes post the start of the COVID-19 pandemic during SY 2019-20.

For District Alpha, Mr. Appleton noticed an increase by a small amount when comparing the year before the COVID-19 pandemic hit (five students in 2018-19) to two years post pandemic (13 students in 2021-22). Although there was an uptick in HHM students when comparing pre and post COVID-19 years, 13 was still less than the 14 students reported during the 2017-18 SY. Mr. Appleton cited loss of jobs, moving into the community due to financial restrictions, and moving back with family as the biggest factors influencing the HHM rate in his district.

In District Beta, the HHM rate remained fairly consistent for the first two years of assessment data, 21 HHM students in 2018-19 and 20 HHM students in 2019-20. However, during the 2020-21 SY, there was a significant uptick in the rate, which increased to 29. Mr. Bronx believed that the COVID-19 pandemic likely contributed to the noticeable increase in 2020-21, but additional factors may explain the overall mobility rate in his district. Some of these factors include the mobility of blue-collar workers, which coincides with the availability of blue-collar jobs at packing plants in surrounding communities, and the search for stable housing and employment for highly mobile families.

The trends in District Gamma regarding longitudinal HHM rates illustrated a curious picture because the first two years were fairly consistent (561 HHM students in 2018-19, and 566 HHM students in 2020-21) but two years after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the HHM rate nearly doubled to 1,004 students. Therefore, the district did not report an immediate increase in their HHM rate post COVID-19, but some explanation is needed to account for the delayed, yet substantial increase in the HHM rate. Mrs. Glendale did attribute the substantial increase in HHM rates to struggles many families faced during the COVID-19 pandemic including loss of jobs, company shut downs, and an economic downturn. However, speaking to factors that influence the overall HHM rate in her district, Mrs. Glendale hypothesized:

Overall, it's going to be the overall city average income, and what it is that the city has for opportunities for individuals who may not have terminal degrees, or gotten some trade that they can use to generate income. And the cost of housing, really also in the city is quite high, even for people that have jobs that you would consider, \$50 thousand, \$45 thousand, they still see their rent as very high. And housing overall, it's very difficult to buy a home.

As evidenced by Mrs. Glendale's quote, she believed that a multitude of factors, especially if they are compounded, could negatively impact a family's ability in her district to find stable housing, which could result in increased mobility. Factors such as education level, lacking a trade skill, earning low wages, paying high rent, and housing shortages all contribute to HHM rates in this suburban district.

Theme 5: How Districts Track HHM Students

The fifth theme that emerged through interview transcript analysis pertained to how districts tracked their HHM students. In District Alpha, Mr. Appleton stated that academic achievement for HHM students is tracked the same as every other student: through standardized assessments, grades, and ACT tests. When he was asked what the district does with HHM state standardized assessment data after it is received, his response was; “We’ve never really broken it down. Our data is by grade level... it’s not part of that. I’ve never seen it broken down until this study.” His response indicated that the district does not differentiate between HHM and non-HHM students through tracking and that prior to his participation in the present study, he had never been presented with longitudinal data illustrating HHM performance trends in his district, albeit having occupied his current position for 14 years.

In District Beta, Mr. Bronx detailed how faculty reviews student achievement data in Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings and then decides interventions through their Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) process. Mr. Bronx had this to say about the PLCs as they relate to tracking HHM students:

And that happens... on a case-by-case basis, and those meetings [can be] pretty detailed and pretty lengthy. And so we really do, our principals, our teachers, are very thorough in that regard as far as trying to problem solve all possible options for kids. That’s where they make those adjustments for these kids they’ve identified through... formative and summative assessments by teachers, standardized achievement data, whether it’s AIMSWeb or whether it’s Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) or whether it’s the state test.

Mr. Bronx's response indicated that HHM students, or those suspected of being homeless, are given individualized attention in his district as faculty members engage in a collaborative process to develop individualized interventions to address the unique challenges faced by those students. Additionally, the district's teachers and administrators rely on a variety of assessment tools to better understand student performance and engage in ongoing "nuanced conversations" with students' families about what the district can do to not only help students get to school on a regular basis, but also be more successful when they get there.

When Mrs. Glendale in District Gamma was asked to describe how academic achievement for HHM students is tracked, she indicated it was similar to the rest of the students. When the district receives state standardized assessment data, it is disbursed to each building, grade, and classroom. However, the teachers already have interventions in place prior to receive state assessment data because they have received performance feedback from the district common assessment. Teachers receive data weekly, so interventions can change on a weekly basis as they aim to develop instruction to target aspects of the assessments where students were unable to achieve proficiency. District Gamma also relies heavily on graphing student progress for all children and the time faculty puts in to set individualized goals and helping students visualize their growth so they can see the payoff of working hard. Mrs. Glendale had the following to say about this method of tracking:

The more time we spend with each student talking about the goals and helping them see their growth, because that's meaningful for children that they see how much they grow... and the celebration of that growth. So we continue to try to

monitor all of the students and the students who identify as homeless go through that same identification in growth process.

So although HHM students are tracked using the same methods as non-HHM students in District Gamma, HHM students still have access to an individualized tracking process to form goals and track personal growth. HHM youth in particular could benefit from a tracking process that has the potential to empower students to take control of their learning and encourage a growth mindset.

Theme 6: The Variability in HHM Student Assessment Performance

During the interviews with homeless liaisons, they were each presented with a copy of their district's HHM assessment data trends and the researcher's subsequent analysis. As homeless liaisons were describing what they noticed in their assessment trends, they were also asked to provide reasons, based on their personal experience and knowledge, why they believed their districts were observing these trends in performance.

In District Alpha, ELA averages decreased from 2017-18 while Math averages increased in that time frame. ACT averages decreased from 2017-18 to 2018-19, but then increased from 2018-19 to 2021-22. ELA proficiency and Math proficiency rates both increased from 2017-18 to 2021-22. The increases in assessment scores in District Alpha were attributed to a number of factors. Mr. Appleton provided a wide range of possible factors, which he believed accounted for higher performance scores, citing:

More independent study, independent access to teachers, more opportunities for kids to seek extra help. We have a very large staff for a school our size so there's a lot more opportunity for students to seek the help they need. Also, the professional development. We've been working with the multi-tiered system,

MTSS, for the last three years. PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support Program) has been incorporated in our system so we're seeing more success with that.

Mr. Appleton believes that the intervention strategies and programs his district has instituted in recent years have made a positive impact on HHM students' performance on standardized assessments.

District Beta on the other hand, saw decreases across all benchmarks when comparing ELA and Math averages and proficiency percentages from 2018-19 to 2020-21. Mr. Bronx hypothesized that decreases were caused primarily by attendance issues because 37%-38% of his district's students are option enrolled in, which limits transportation to and from school in parts of town where some option enrolled students reside, including into the neighboring Native American Reservation. Mr. Bronx described his district's HHM assessment data as “[following] the trend, the trend with the disruption, for the whole general student population, on balance, with COVID-19 being a significant [factor].” He further cited possible reasons such as high mobility and option enrollment rates, and transportation gaps, as catalysts for exacerbating the difficulties previously faced by many HHM students.

For District Gamma, both ELA and Math averages decreased from 2018-19 to 2020-21, but bounced back even higher than before when going from 2020-21 to 2021-22. Interestingly, ELA proficiency increased from one year to the next while Math proficiency was the inverse. Mrs. Glendale surmised that increases in HHM assessment performance could be attributed to additional COVID-19 pandemic relief funds, hiring of more staff and tutors, more individualized instruction, reduced class sizes, purchasing of

additional programs, and offering more academic, social/emotional, and trauma-based supports.

During cross-case analysis, it was noted that performance on state standardized assessments for HHM students varied greatly from year-to-year within districts and across districts as well. As evidenced by the assessment data, while many HHM students fell short of proficiency benchmarks, others achieved scores of proficient or advanced. This may be an indication that despite the circumstances these HHM students face as a result of being homeless or highly mobile, some demonstrated academic resiliency and still achieved highly in school.

Theme 7: Comparing Support Services Within Districts and Across Communities

The purpose of requesting each district complete the SDCSS was to identify and catalog the services available to homeless students and their families both within the school/district as well as the surrounding community, should HHM students and their families require them. Additionally, creating a catalog of services could potentially assist the homeless liaisons in coordinating and connecting students and their families with necessary services, as mandated in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Table 6 illustrates the spread and quantity of services available to support HHM students and their families in all three districts; including both services that are offered within the schools/district as well as those either available out in the immediate surrounding community and/or district partnerships with external entities and organizations. The comprehensive catalogue was created as a joint effort between the homeless liaison and researcher to establish the most complete and exhaustive list of services available to HHM students in each district at the time of the study's completion. When completing

the SDCSS for District Gamma, it was discovered that the city's Police Department released a comprehensive online Community Resource Guide detailing any and all public support services available to individuals that required them. Thus, this Community Resource Guide was heavily relied upon when composing the catalog of community services for District Gamma.

Table 6 below provides a breakdown of the type and quantity of services found in each district and the district's immediate surrounding community, with each service organized into one of nine categories. It was found that all of the districts offer the same core set of services: breakfast, lunch, snacks, school nurses, transportation, tutoring, counseling/therapy, and school resource officers. Districts Beta and Gamma also offered clothing services while District Gamma provided additional liaisons, translators, parenting classes, and car seats for their students. Although District Alpha provided a multitude of services for HHM youth, the Tribal government also provided an ample array of services for members of the Tribe and those residing on the reservation. The Tribe offered multiple services addressing housing, academic, health and mental health needs as well as provided various legal and law enforcement services. However, District Beta's surrounding community only offered additional services through two local churches and through a partnership with the State's Department of Health and Human Services and a non-profit organization located in a neighboring county.

All of the districts and their schools provide a significant amount of services for HHM students but in the smaller, more rural districts Alpha and Beta, the schools took on a larger share of the responsibility administering those services when compared to District Gamma. District Gamma does provide a considerable quantity and variety of

services for its HHM students, but because resources available in the surrounding community are substantially more than what is found in the rural districts, the percentage of services offered by the district in relation to all services offered is smaller. Not surprisingly, because District Gamma serves a more densely populated suburban area, the district and the surrounding community are able to provide substantially more services for HHM youth when compared to both of the rural districts.

Table 6

Current Support Services Available for HHM Students by District

Service	Alpha		Beta		Gamma	
	School	Community	School	Community	School	Community
Housing	0	2	0	0	0	21
Academic	1	2	2	0	2	9
Food	3	1	3	0	6	21
Clothing	0	0	1	0	1	0
Transportation	1	1	1	0	1	0
Health/Mental Health/Dental	4	3	2	0	2	35
Financial	0	0	0	0	1	1
Legal/Law Enforcement	1	4	1	1	1	3
Other	0	2	1	3	4	47
Column Total	10	15	11	4	18	137
Total	25		15		155	

Note. Although some entities/organizations provided more than one service, each was counted and represented only once in the table based on the service category most frequently provided and/or utilized.

Mixed Methods Integration

Visual Joint Display

Visual joint displays provide one way for researchers to organize, display, and integrate results and findings from both the qualitative and quantitative strands of their mixed methods study designs (Guetterman, Fetters, & Creswell, 2015). The merging of

the qualitative and quantitative data with multiple embedded points of analysis and integration in the present explanatory sequential mixed methods case study was essential for answering the mixed methods research questions posed at the forefront of the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Figure 2 depicts a visual joint display summarizing the integration of information pertaining to changes in HHM rates and assessment performance over time and quantity of support services currently available, while highlighting major features of each district's corresponding future action plans.

Figure 2

Visual Joint Display Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Data

District	Changes in HHM Rates	Assessment Data Trends	Current Support Services	Action Plan
Alpha	↓ from 2017-18 to 2018-19 ↑ from 2018-19 to 2021-22	↓ ELA Average ↑ ELA Proficiency ↑ Math Average ↑ Math Proficiency ↑ ↓ ACT Average	District Only=10 District+ Community=25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand transportation services for students with special needs that have aged out of public schools Continue funding therapy programs for K-12 students
Beta	↓ from 2018-19 to 2019-20 ↑ from 2019-20 to 2020-21	↓ ELA Averages ↓ ELA Proficiency ↓ Math Averages ↓ Math Proficiency	District Only=11 District+ Community=15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finish district remodel/addition project Apply for enrichment program grant for K-6 students

District	Changes in HHM Rates	Assessment Data Trends	Current Support Services	Action Plan
Gamma	↑from 2018-19 to 2020-21 ↑from 2020-21 to 2021-22	↓↑ELA Averages ↑↑ELA Proficiency ↓↑Math Averages ↓↓Math Proficiency	District Only=18 District+ Community=155	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire more nurse practitioners • Extend grant funding to continue school-based therapy services

Note. A ↑ arrow symbolizes an increase and a ↓ arrow symbolizes a decrease.

In Figure 2, the second column from the left denotes changes in HHM rates over the last six years in all three districts, with all districts experiencing an increase in their HHM rate at some point within the last six years. Column three summarizes assessment data trends and illustrates that for Districts Alpha and Gamma, HHM students' performance on state standardized assessments both improved and worsened at different points in time, while District Beta's HHM students exclusively observed a decrease in performance across all content areas and indicators. As column four demonstrates, District Alpha currently provides 10 district services that can potentially benefit HHM students while a total of 25 services between the district and the surrounding community are available. District Beta currently provides 11 services in-house, but a total of 15 services can be found between the district and community offerings, while District Gamma provides 18 services with a total of 155 when adding what is offered in the district and the community. In the final column of the table, a brief synopsis of each homeless liaison's action plans is provided as the culmination of all of the findings and results from the three phases of data collection and analysis summarized in the previous columns. All of the quantitative and qualitative information gathered, analyzed, and

synthesized was used to identify areas of need where the addition of supplemental services could serve to further benefit each district's respective HHM student populations.

CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Overview

The following chapter provides a recap of the eight research questions and accompanying aims that guided the present study followed by a discussion summarizing the findings and results from the previous chapter as they relate to the answering of each research question. Implications for each strand of the explanatory sequential mixed methods study design are presented and the chapter concludes with a discussion on the limitations and delimitations of the study and provides recommendations for future research.

Quantitative Summary

The first phase guiding data collection and analysis in the quantitative strand of the present explanatory sequential mixed methods study was guided by two quantitative research questions to achieve two aims. Aim one was: to describe HHM rates and student performance on state standardized assessments over time, and the second aim was: to compare HHM student performance on state standardized assessments across the three districts. The two subsequent research questions developed to achieve those aims were as follows: (1) How has the HHM rate changed in each district from August 1, 2016 through May 31, 2022 and how does that compare across districts? And (2) How did HHM students perform on English Language Arts, Mathematics, and ACT state standardized assessments across all three districts between August 1, 2016 through May 31, 2022?

RQ1: HHM Rate Within and Across Districts

It was anticipated that the present study would demonstrate that the HHM rate in school districts with rural locales (Alpha and Beta) is much lower than that of the

suburban district (Gamma). That did in fact prove to be accurate as District Alpha, with a total student enrollment of around 600, reported between five and 14 HHM students across assessment years, while District Beta, with total enrollment around 400, reported between 20 and 29 HHM students across assessment years, and District Gamma, with about 15,000 total enrollment, reported substantially higher rates between 561 and 1004 HHM students across assessment years. Somewhat unexpected, however, was the finding that District Alpha had less students identified as HHM compared to District Beta across all assessment years even though the district had about 200 more total students enrolled on average. When comparing mobility rates gathered from assessment data for Districts Alpha and Beta to the snapshot comparisons compiled from respective State Department of Education webpages, further inconsistencies regarding HHM rates across the rural districts become apparent. Table 1 reveals that for SY 2016-17, District Alpha reported a 10.77% mobility rate while District Beta's was 3.42%. Then in SY 2021-22, District Alpha's rate dropped to 6.09% while District Beta's rose to 7.46%. Comparing the mobility rates in Table 1, as reported by State Departments of Education, to the mobility rates received through district assessment data, it would appear that District Alpha's HHM population is being underrepresented.

One final observation regarding the change in HHM rate over time is how rates have changed in all three districts post the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020. In Districts Beta and Gamma, there was a noticeable increase in the number of students identified post the COVID-19 pandemic. While District Beta's HHM rate increased by nearly 50% the year immediately following, interestingly, there was a delay for District Gamma because the increase was not evident until SY 2021-22, at which

point the HHM rate nearly doubled from the year before. Also of interest was the fact that District Alpha's post COVID-19 pandemic HHM rate was actually lower than it had been in 2017-18, pre-pandemic. Although there was an increase from five HHM students in SY 2018-19 to thirteen in 2021-22, that number was less than the fourteen reported in SY 2017-18.

RQ2: HHM Student Standardized Assessment Performance Across Districts

Assessment data for all students identified as HHM in Districts Alpha, Beta, and Gamma for ELA, Math, and ACT state standardized assessments administered between August 1, 2016 through May 31, 2022 was requested and gathered. While data was fragmented and incomplete from some of the districts, 32 students in District Alpha had at least one accompanying assessment score, 13 students in District Beta had at least one score, and 2,128 students in District Gamma had at least one assessment score.

It became apparent through analysis that because states typically develop and administer their own versions of state standardized assessments and because assessment tools changed in all three districts within the six year period, the assessment data portraying low and high score values as well as averages for ELA and Mathematics could not be compared across districts because scale scores and achievement benchmarks differ across assessments. However, because the ACT assessment remains consistent across states, the ACT composite score-related values could be compared. Despite the variation in assessment tools across states and even within states as assessments were changed, it was still worthwhile to describe proficiency rates across years and districts and standard deviation values, as well as note changes in average scores during analysis.

The joint display in Figure 2 above consolidated assessment trends for each district. When looking at overall HHM performance in each district based on provided assessment data, District Beta was the only district to experience decreased achievement percentages on both the ELA and Math assessments, both with regards to changes in average scores and proficiency percentages for HHM students. Districts Alpha and Gamma, however were a bit more sporadic in terms of HHM performance on state standardized assessments. District Alpha's students mostly demonstrated improvement longitudinally except for the ACT average category which increased first, then decreased, and the ELA average category which exclusively decreased over the years. Data for District Gamma, on the other hand, displayed that while ELA proficiency increased consistently each year, Math proficiency decreased from year-to-year. However, both ELA and Math average scores decreased from the first year to the next, but then increased from the second year to the third. Referring back to the descriptive statistics for all three districts in Tables 4 and 5, there was a large range of scores, typically hundreds of points, for both ELA and Mathematics assessments within each district, indicating substantial variability in assessment performance within HHM student populations.

Implications of the Quantitative Results

Regarding rates of homelessness among Native American populations, Henry et al. (2021) found that in 2020, the number of Native Americans experiencing individual homelessness increased by 5% overall. Because District Alpha is located on a Native American Reservation, HHM rates were examined to determine if the national increase in homelessness among Native American populations in 2020 would be reflected in this district's HHM student assessment data. Although District Alpha was unable to provide

HHM rates for SY 2019-20 and 2020-21, the increase in HHM students from five in SY 2018-19 to 13 in SY 2021-22 suggests that families in District Alpha were not immune to the national increase in rates of Native American homelessness in 2020.

Although HHM rates were found to be on the rise across all three districts, with current HHM rates surpassing pre-pandemic levels in two out of three districts, increases in HHM rates did not necessarily translate to decreased performance on state standardized assessments for HHM students in every district, content area, and year. However, in District Beta especially, where performance on state standardized assessments declined after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, it can be theorized that the COVID-19 pandemic likely exacerbated many of the obstacles and hardships already faced by that population of students. If it is presumed that the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in reduced gains in core subjects such as reading and math (Kuhfeld et al., 2020) and that if COVID-19 pandemic-related classroom learning loss is reflected in state standardized assessments, then the declines in state standardized assessment performance in all three districts for HHM student populations post COVID-19 may be attributed, at least in part, to the disruption in learning caused by school closures and subsequent virtual learning experiences. Despite the observed declines in HHM assessment performance in some districts, the range of scores for ELA and Math assessments across all districts demonstrated substantial variability in achievement within HHM student populations. With score ranges sometimes spanning hundreds, or even thousands of points, it was evident that while many HHM students scored well below proficiency levels, some HHM students achieved proficiency or advanced status as well. These findings are in alignment with findings by Obradović et al. (2009) and Cutuli et al. (2013) that suggest instances of

academic resiliency among HHM youth as evidenced by extreme variability in achievement with some students scoring highly.

Qualitative Summary

The second phase of the data collection and analysis for the qualitative strand of the present explanatory sequential mixed methods case study was driven by two aims underscored by three qualitative research questions. Aim one was: to understand how definitions of key terms such as *homeless* and *highly mobile* impact eligibility and access to support services for HHM students, and the second aim was: to understand the role of homeless education liaisons in providing and coordinating services for HHM students both within schools/districts as well as in the community. The three research questions guiding the qualitative strand were as follows: (1) How does each district define *homeless* and *highly mobile*? (2) How do each district's definitions inform eligibility for and access to support services for HHM students? And (3) What is the role of homeless education liaisons when providing and coordinating support services for HHM students?

RQ1: Defining Critical Terms

It was a common theme across the three districts that state and federal definitions for *homeless* and *highly mobile* were the ones most often utilized by data stewards when retrieving assessment data, and by homeless liaisons when identifying students that meet those requirements. In general, all of the homeless liaisons understood that homelessness is a very broad term and can be used to describe individuals in a wide array of temporary circumstances that range from sheltered to unsheltered forms. Even if homeless liaisons could not recall the exact definition of homeless youth as defined by the MVA (2015), homeless liaisons were able to articulate how their districts defined the terms and in most

cases, were able to provide information on how to access the district's definitions. Moreover, all of the homeless liaisons also understood that mobility rates increase as students move in and out of the district multiple times per year. In most cases, however, it was the data stewards who were able to provide more concrete definitions of critical terms because they had to be able to differentiate HHM students from non-HHM students within the assessment data.

RQ2: Critical Terms Informing Eligibility for Services

While District Gamma adhered fairly closely to its State's definitions when identifying HHM students, in Districts Alpha and Beta, there seemed to be no hard and fast rules when it came to addressing the unique circumstances surrounding student homelessness in their respective districts. Perhaps because Districts Alpha and Beta serve a much smaller population and tight-knit community, when compared to District Gamma, they may have more flexibility when applying definitions on a case-by-case basis to determine eligibility. Particularly in District Alpha, which primarily serves Native American students, the State's definitions do not align perfectly with the cultural norms and familial dynamics of many Native families, which leaves additional room for interpretation, flexibility, and perhaps even confusion. Although not requested in the present study, District Gamma initially provided categories for HHM students listing their housing status as part of their demographic information included with the assessment data. This was the only district to do so, and this suggests that District Gamma is taking the identification of HHM students one step further by also denoting current housing status to include typologies, which may translate to more tailored service offerings.

RQ3: Roles of Homeless Education Liaisons

Each district reported employing one homeless education liaison, however, all of these individuals also had additional duties and responsibilities assigned to them beyond serving HHM students. Although only one individual in each district was the designated homeless education liaison, it became evident that in order to adequately serve HHM students, cooperation and collaboration with numerous faculty and staff throughout the district was essential. Collectively, the districts identified fellow administrators, principals, general education teachers, SpEd teachers, paraprofessionals, secretaries, school nurses, and counselors as well as members from community organizations as some of the likely individuals who may be asked to coordinate or provide support services for HHM students.

Implications of the Qualitative Findings

In order to identify HHM students correctly and efficiently so they may be eligible for support services, HHM students and their families could benefit from knowing exactly how their respective districts define *homeless* and *highly mobile* and also where that information is located. Having access to tools that assist in self-identification and clearly state eligibility requirements could result in increased access and utilization of appropriate support services. The coordinated approach to serving HHM students noted across all three districts aids in facilitating that HHM students are promptly and correctly identified for services that are tailored to their individual needs (ED, 2016) as mandated by the McKinney-Vento Act (2015). Additionally, there is evidence in District Alpha that by bringing in members of the community and additional stakeholders to participate in Memorandum of Agreements (MOA) meetings, the district

is utilizing culturally responsive methods, as recommended by Jackson and Fashant (2021), when addressing homelessness in Native American populations.

Mixed Methods Summary

Three aims were developed to guide the mixed methods strand. The first aim was: to provide empirical evidence regarding the impact of access to support services on HHM student performance on state standardized assessments. The second aim was: to compare the availability of support services and HHM student performance across the three districts. And finally, to develop action plans for each district to improve access to support services and performance on state standardized assessments for HHM students.

The three subsequent research questions guiding the mixed methods strand were: (1) How do the three districts compare in the types and quantities of services they are able to provide to their HHM students? (2) How does having access to support services both within the school/district and in the community impact HHM student performance on English Language Arts, Mathematics, and ACT state standardized assessments? And (3) How can the data gathered from HHM student state standardized assessments, faculty interviews, and surveys of district and community support services (SDCSS) be utilized to design individualized action plans for each district in order to improve access to support services and performance on state standardized assessments for HHM students?

RQ1: Types and Quantities of Services Across Districts

It was found that all three districts offered a core set of services that were available to HHM students which included access to school breakfast and lunch meals, snacks, access to school nurses, transportation services, additional tutoring opportunities, counseling/therapy services, and the benefit of school resource officers. While all three

districts provided free or reduced-price meals if students and their families met the eligibility requirements, District Alpha was the only school district that qualified for a district-wide universal meal benefit for all of its students. Districts Beta and Gamma, however, offered clothing services for their students while District Gamma was able to provide additional liaisons and translators and offered parenting classes and car seats for their students. Although none of the districts offered housing services, the non-housing services they offer likely still have an impact on HHM students to varying degrees, as posited by Morton et al. (2018b).

After completing the SDCSS and examining the proportion of district support services compared to community services, it became evident that particularly in the more rural Districts Alpha and Beta, the schools served as a central location offering a multitude of services. Furthermore, both rural districts offered a much higher percentage of services in relation to all services offered, when compared to District Gamma in the suburban locale. This may suggest that when HHM students are attending school in the rural districts, they are able to access much-needed services that otherwise may not be available to them when they are not in school. An unexpected finding was that in District Alpha, the rural district on a Native American Reservation, the surrounding community offered a substantial amount of support services, even a higher quantity than what the district offered. And although District Gamma provided roughly the same amount of in-house services to its HHM students, it was not surprising that District Gamma's surrounding community offered and estimated 155 additional services, substantially more than what was found in the communities surrounding rural Districts Alpha and Beta. These findings comparing the quantity of support services available across different

locales support findings from previous research by Mullins et al. (2016) that a wider range of services is typically more readily available to HHM individuals in more urban areas when compared to rural locales.

RQ2: The Impact of Support Services on State Standardized Assessments

Without knowing which students received which services, the present study was limited in determining the impact that support services had on HHM student state standardized assessment performance. Because there was no variability among support services offered, and therefore each student was recorded as having the same access to the same support services district-wide, the independent variable of support services showed no variation between students or longitudinally. Therefore, regardless of how much student assessment scores varied from one student to the next, because support services remained constant, no correlation between the two variables could be computed. Despite these limitations, the assessment data for each district in conjunction with SDCSS aided in forming a more complete picture of how HHM students are being served in their respective districts and how their performance on state standardized assessments has changed over time. When completing SDCSS, homeless liaisons from all districts revealed that their districts have added or expanded services in recent years. While this can be interpreted as a positive trend across districts when it comes to serving HHM students, the relationship between support services and assessment scores is less obvious. HHM students in Districts Alpha and Gamma experienced both improvements and declines in assessment performance across indicators and content areas at various points in the longitudinal assessment data. HHM students in District Beta, however, exclusively faced declines in performance in both ELA and Math average scores and proficiency

percentages from one assessment year to the next. If a correlation between support services and assessment scores can be made, perhaps increased utilization of support services by HHM youth can lead to resource gains and improvement in performance while counteracting the harmful effects of complex trauma experienced by many homeless youth (Keane et al., 2020).

RQ3: Actions Plans to Expand Services and Improve Performance

Referring back to the emancipatory nature of the critical theory framework initially selected to frame the present study, the final step in the triphasic data collection and analysis model dictated the researcher and homeless liaison collaborate to develop an action plan to enact future change for HHM students. Therefore, after completing the SDCSS, each district's homeless liaison identified the district's biggest areas of need regarding services that are lacking or absent from the district that they would like to see added in the future to benefit their HHM student population. The researcher then met with each homeless liaison to discuss future planning and implementation of changes they envision making to the district in an effort to further expand support services for HHM students and their families.

District Alpha

According to Mr. Appleton, the Tribe is currently working on expanding transportation services for special needs students that have aged-out of the school system at 21 years old but still require transportation assistance to visit neighboring cities to receive support services. This transportation program is a Tribal initiative, but if added, would be offering a valuable service to students that no longer meet the criteria for

schools to serve HHM students under the MVA (2015) that are over the age of 21 and have graduated from public school.

Another method Mr. Appleton determined might benefit HHM students in the coming future could be the potential demand in the district to maintain a number of the school-based mental health services currently offered to students. The district believes it is important to maintain these therapy services for students at no cost so should the current programs end or grant funding expire, the district plans to continue to cover the cost of the services using district funds because they are in such high demand. Currently the district contracts three different therapy service programs, which are available year-round, and because students heavily rely on those services, he believes it is essential that the district continues to offer those services in the future.

District Beta

Mr. Bronx divulged two ways in which his district is currently instituting change and plans to institute change in the future to benefit not just HHM students, but ideally all students in the district. Currently, District Beta is in the midst of a massive 14-month remodeling construction project of its school buildings, costing almost \$5 million. The extensive renovations and additions will create more classrooms and restrooms, expand space for existing classrooms, as well as update the heating and air conditioning system for the PK-12 building.

Additionally, in the fall of 2023, Mr. Bronx stated the district plans to apply for the 21st Century Grant Program for the 2024-25 SY through the State's Department of Education, that would provide the district with funding for before and after school enrichment programs consisting of project-based learning, learning through

play, as well as exposure to music and the arts for students in grades PK-6. If awarded, the district could receive anywhere between \$50-\$100 thousand annually for five years, perhaps with the possibility of re-applying for additional years of funding in the future. Since this substantial remodel and expansion of the school building with the addition of the enrichment program will affect the entire PK-12 building, Mr. Bronx anticipates these additions will benefit all students in PK-12, HHM students included.

District Gamma

Mrs. Glendale explained the district is working to find ways to add more registered nurses in the near future because the current student-to-nurse ratio is too high. The district plans to not only hire more nurse practitioners but work toward replacing the current nursing assistants with more qualified healthcare providers as well. She believes this would be an added benefit for all students across the board because many students in the district have Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) or 504 Plans that require they receive specific supports and accommodations. Although discussions on this matter have been initiated with the school board, the ultimate deciding factor is funding, and securing enough funding to pay the salaries of additional nursing staff.

Mrs. Glendale also identified the potential loss of school-based therapy services at the end of the 2022-23 SY as one additional area of concern when considering support services for HHM students. Because the school-based therapy services are supported by a government grant, when the grant expires, those services will likely end. Ideally, the district would like to keep the services active, even after the grant expires, but that would mean the district would not have sufficient funding to cover the cost of those services. Those services would likely still be made available through the district, but students'

families would be expected to cover the costs. Mrs. Glendale believes that school-based therapy is especially beneficial for many HHM students because they are at higher risk of having trauma impact their lives and produce stress and emotional distress, so school-based therapy is one way to help this population cope with those stressors and overcome their traumatic experiences.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations

The scope and generalizability of the present study were both limited by several factors. First and foremost, the quantitative assessment data received for both districts Alpha and Beta proved to be very limiting in several ways, thus, impacting the extent of analysis as well as the subsequent interpretations and conclusions drawn. Extremely small sample sizes for both districts Alpha and Beta (<30 HHM students and assessment scores per year), compounded with fragmented assessment data, the inability to discern whether the same students were represented longitudinally in the assessment data, and independent variables that remained constant proved difficult for completing worthwhile statistical analysis. Although some comparison across districts was possible, ensuing results should be interpreted cautiously because comparisons were drawn even though no two districts provided the same combination of years with types of assessment data, state assessments changed within the last six years in all three districts, and assessment tools differed across states.

The present study did not gather nor analyze state standardized assessment data from any students that were not considered homeless or highly mobile. Therefore, it was not possible to draw conclusions about how HHM student performance on state

standardized assessments compared to students that are not HHM. This study can only describe how HHM students have performed in their respective districts over the last six years but cannot determine whether their HHM status has impacted their performance on state standardized assessments when comparing their scores to students that are not HHM.

It was also a challenge to count and catalogue how many support services are available for HHM students in each district and their surrounding community. Not only was the researcher heavily reliant on the recall ability of homeless liaisons when determining how long services had been available, but at times, the difficulty of delineating between a service, entire program, or entity providing multiple services, resulted in a somewhat subjective count. The subjective counting of the combination of stand-alone services without official programs, both past and present partnerships with community agencies and organizations, the offering of multiple services by one entity/organization, and even including temporary programs likely impacted the objectivity and accuracy of the count.

Delimitations

The present study demonstrated the very reality of how difficult it is for some districts to track HHM student performance because they either have a small HHM student population, the sometimes unpredictable and volatile aspects associated with entering/exiting homelessness, the fact that homelessness remains a “hidden” problem in their community, or cultural/local definitions of homelessness may not align with state and federal definitions. When dealing with tracking of assessment performance of HHM student populations, it became evident that determining what data is unavailable and why

can be just as telling as the data that is available. Although some assessment data was very incomplete and inconsistent from one district to the next, the present study did yield insights into the tracking methods each district utilizes to identify HHM students and track mobility rates and performance. The present study also highlighted the vast variety of support services available to HHM students in their districts and surrounding communities while also identifying inadequacies that present opportunities for expansion and improvement of services. Finally, the mere act of compiling and presenting the findings of aggregated assessment trends to homeless liaisons proved valuable to homeless liaisons as some admitted to having never seen the data broken down in this manner nor reviewed HHM performance isolated within their district.

Future Research

The present study has demonstrated that it was not sufficient to merely ask whether the availability of support services for HHM students correlates to their performance on state standardized assessments, without also determining individual utilization of services as well. In order to conduct correlational Multiple Regression analysis, the frequency of each HHM student's utilization of support services would need to be known to show variability within independent variables. Therefore, the present study was limited in its ability to establish a correlation between HHM performance on state standardized assessments and availability of support services because constant values in support service variables did not produce any variation from one student to the next or longitudinally. Future research must examine how receipt of specific services impacts performance on state standardized assessments for HHM students and develop an appropriate method to gauge the specific services students receive. One way this might be

possible is to also receive attendance data from districts on HHM students, which would result in variability across students and years. If one assumes that when students are present in school, they receive these services and when they are absent, they do not, then adding attendance records would create variability among students and a correlation between assessment performance and receipt of services may then be established.

It may also be beneficial for future case study research to select similar districts that present less variability with regards to district size, locale categorization, and state. Because the present case study selected three very different cases for analysis, cross-case comparisons proved challenging because of vast differences in HHM population sample sizes across districts as well as differences in state assessment tools, critical definitions, and funding models. A closer examination of district and state reporting systems as they relate to tracking HHM students is likely warranted as well because multiple districts reported changes in reporting systems as obstacles that prevented retrieval of assessment data from prior years.

Finally, future research should aim to incorporate the emic perspective of HHM students themselves. Perhaps through interviews with HHM students presented through narrative inquiry, the researcher could gather valuable information in regards to HHM students' own utilization of support services and experiences with state standardized assessments. Of course, this would also require additional precautions and safeguards when studying minors of vulnerable populations, but nevertheless, would be invaluable to research incorporating HHM youth.

Conclusion

The present explanatory sequential mixed methods case study demonstrated that it is extremely difficult to not only track HHM student performance on state standardized assessments, but also to quantify support services available for these students, and to correlate access to services and subsequent performance on state standardized assessments, especially in districts that experience a high mobility rate and those that are located in rural locales. This may be due to a number of factors including but not limited to: limiting definitions of critical terms defining what it means to be homeless and/or highly mobile, frequent movement of HHM students between districts resulting in missed days of school when assessments are administered, districts not tracking HHM students in a way that differentiates them from the way the rest of their non-HHM peers are tracked, comparing performance of HHM students from different states that each utilize their own assessment tools, and finally, the often temporary nature of homelessness and districts being unaware of current or past housing status which likely results in some students falling through the cracks. It was a common theme across districts that homeless liaisons described adding or expanding services as opposed to reducing the number of services they have been able to provide since August 1, 2016. This is a reassuring trend that emphasizes the need for continued support for these HHM students, especially in post COVID-19 pandemic years. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic seems to have provided an opportunity for each district to receive additional funding to increase the number of services they are able to provide as a result of pandemic funding initiatives such as the American Rescue Plan (ARP) and Elementary and Secondary School Relief Funds (ESSER). Based on the proficiency rates within the assessment data each district

was able to provide, the decrease in proficiency in District Beta pre and post the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in both ELA and Math might suggest there was some learning loss, which may be attributed, at least in part, to the COVID-19 pandemic. This may also ring true for HHM students' performance on the Math assessment in District Gamma as proficiency consistently decreased when comparing pre and post-COVID-19 assessment data. District Alpha; however, was an outlier in this regard because their HHM students' performance on both the ELA and Math assessment improved from pre and post COVID-19 years when students were assessed during the 2020-21 SY. The decrease in achievement for two out of the three districts post the COVID-19 pandemic may demonstrate the additional demand for maintaining the programs and services added through pandemic relief funds, as HHM students in these districts will likely require additional supports and interventions to make up for pandemic-induced learning loss.

Despite the extensive limitations to the present study that illustrate the difficulty in tracking HHM student performance on state standardized assessments and correlating performance to support services, it was very obvious that in the rural districts especially, the schools were the central point of contact and served as the primary service providers for HHM students and their families. Moreover, it was encouraging to learn that although each district has, to some degree, policies and procedures in place to serve their HHM student population, many of their offered services likely benefit both students identified as HHM as well as those that are not. This study also demonstrated the intertwined and co-dependent relationship between what services districts are able to provide and the funding they receive. Funding is an important, if not the most critical factor, that determines which services the districts are able to provide at little or no cost and the

longevity of those services depends heavily on government funding and grants, as well as district budgets. Given that two out of the three districts reported not receiving any funds through the MVA (2015) to support their HHM student populations, it would be worthwhile to further examine and compare funding models in relation to support services offered and subsequent performance on state standardized assessments.

However, it was typically the case that when funding was increased, all districts reported the ability to provide additional services to benefit a wide range of students, HHM students included, either by hiring more staff, purchasing new programs, or providing additional services. Lastly, with the formulation of action plans in each district, homeless liaisons demonstrated their district's commitment to actively seeking creative solutions to either maintain current services already offered to HHM students or to brainstorm new strategies to increase the quantity and/or quality of services available in the near future.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Adult Consent Form

Template Revised: 05/03/2020



ADULT CONSENT FORM

IRB Project ID#: 21159

1. Participant Study Title:

Support Services Impacting State Assessments for Homeless and High Mobility Youth

2. Formal Study Title:

Support Services Impacting State Standardized Assessments for Homeless and High Mobility Youth: A Mixed Methods Case Study

3. Authorized Study Personnel

Principal Investigator: Veronika (Nika) Cummings, Cell: (719)-221-6265,

Email: vcummings2@unl.edu

Secondary Investigator: Marilyn Grady, PhD, Office: (402)-472-3726,

Email: mgrady1@unl.edu

4. Key Information:

If you agree to participate in this research study, the project will involve:

- Research participants over the age of 19 who are current employees of the school district and are either the designated Homeless Liaison or are the individual(s) primarily responsible for providing support services for homeless and high mobility students and/or data stewards or those individuals in the district with access to student assessment data.
- Study procedures will require the following: (a) retrieval and de-identification of student assessment data, (b) completion of one 45-60 minute interview, (c) completion of one survey of district and community support services that will be completed over a two-week period requiring 1-4 hours of participant's own time, (d) three follow-up "member checking" sessions lasting approximately 30 minutes each to review responses, and (e) participation in up to three, 30-60 minute meetings to create an action plan at the conclusion of the study
- There are some risks associated with the study including risk of loss of confidentiality
- Your data collected from this study may be shared as described below
- You will receive \$0 for your time and participation
- You will be provided with a copy of this consent form
- Your participation is voluntary and you can decided not to participate at any time



5. Invitation

You are invited to take part in this research study. The information in this form is meant to help you decide whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, please ask.

6. Why are you being asked to be in this research study?

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are either your school district's Homeless Liaison, and/or the district's data steward and have access to student assessment data and/or provide services for homeless and highly mobile students. You must be at least 19 years of age and a current employee of the district to participate.

7. What is the reason for doing this research study?

The purpose of this study is to explore how having access to support services impacted performance on state standardized assessments for homeless and high mobility (HHM) youth from 2016-2021. This study aims to (1) understand how your district defines *homeless* and *high mobility* and how performance on state standardized assessments for students with that designation are tracked, (2) explore the support services available to HHM youth both within the district/school and in the community, (3) analyze standardized assessment data, interview data, and data from surveys of district and community support services to determine whether having access to support services impacted achievement on state standardized assessments from 2016-2021 in English Language Arts and Mathematics, and (4) develop an actionable, individualized plan for the district with the goal of increasing access to support services and academic performance for HHM students in your district.

8. What will be done during this research study?

Homeless Liaisons and/or data stewards will be asked to retrieve, de-identify, and compile HHM student assessment data for state standardized assessments administered between August 1, 2016 and May 31, 2021. Homeless Liaisons will also be asked to complete one interview, lasting approximately 45-60 minutes, one survey of district and community support services over a two-week period taking approximately 1-4 hours on their own time, three follow-up "member checking" sessions lasting approximately 30 minutes each, and up to three 30-60 minute meetings to create an action plan at the conclusion of the study.

9. How will my data be used?

This study will involve the collection of private information (name, dates, etc.). The findings of this study from your district will be shared with the Homeless Liaison as well as presented to the researcher's dissertation committee. Furthermore, the findings of this study may be published in academic journals or presented at academic conferences.



10. What are the possible risks of being in this research study?

Loss of Confidentiality:

This research presents risk of loss of confidentiality. To minimize this risk, the following steps will be taken:

- a. Pseudonyms will be used in place of participant names and school districts
- b. The location of each district will be hidden as much as possible
- c. Master lists of participant names, pseudonyms, and codes will be stored in a locked location, separate from all other research data
- d. All electronic research data will be stored on a private, password-protected computer and on a flash drive stored in a lock box, and all paper copies will be stored in a locked filing cabinet
- e. Any and all identifiable participant information disclosed through interviews, state standardized assessment data, or surveys of district and community support services will be removed

11. What are the possible benefits to you?

The possible benefits you may receive from participating in the study are (a) being better informed of the support services, both in the district and out in the community, that are available to your district's homeless and high mobility youth as well as (b) develop ideas to increase academic achievement and access to support services for those students. However, you may not get any benefit from being in this research study.

12. What are the possible benefits to other people?

This study may help inform how public schools in the United States can better serve their homeless and high mobility student population. If schools can increase access to necessary support services for homeless and high mobility students, this may result in an increase in academic achievement and a decrease in adverse outcomes in childhood and adulthood.

13. What are the alternatives to being in this research study?

Instead of being in this research study you can choose not to participate.

14. What will being in this research study cost you?

There is no cost to you to be in this research study.

15. Will you be compensated for being in this research study?

We will not pay you to take part in this study or pay for any out of pocket expenses related to your participation, such as travel costs.



16. What should you do if you have a problem during this research study?

Your welfare is the major concern of every member of the research team. If there is a problem as a direct result of being in this study, you should immediately contact one of the people listed at the beginning of this consent form.

17. How will information about you be protected?

Reasonable steps will be taken to protect your privacy and the confidentiality of your study data; however, in some circumstances we cannot guarantee absolute privacy and/or confidentiality.

Storing Paper Records:

The paper research records will be stored in a locked cabinet in the investigator's office and will only be seen by the research team and/or those authorized to view, access, or use the records during and after the study.

Storing Electronic Records:

The research records will be securely stored electronically through University approved methods and will only be seen by the research team and/or those authorized to view, access, or use the records during and after the study is complete. All audio files will be temporarily stored on a digital audio recorder prior to being transferred to the researcher's private, password-protected computer and uploaded to OneDrive. All electronic data will be stored on the researcher's private, password-protected computer and OneDrive and backed up to a flash drive, which will be securely stored in a lock box.

Those who will have access to your research records are the study personnel, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and any other person, agency, or sponsor as required by law or contract or institutional responsibility. The information from this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings and may be reported individually, or as group or summarized data, but your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

18. What are your rights as a research subject?

You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study. For study related questions, please contact the investigators listed at the beginning of this form. For questions concerning your rights or complaints about the research contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB): Phone: 1(402)-472-6965, Email: irb@unl.edu

19. What will happen if you decide not to be in this research study or decide to stop participating once you start?

You can decide not to be in this research study, or you can stop being in this research study ("withdraw") at any time before, during, or after the research begins for any reason. Deciding not to be in this research study or deciding to withdraw will not affect your relationship with the investigator or with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. You will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled.

**20. Documentation of informed consent**

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to be in this research study. Signing this form means that (1) you have read and understood this consent form, (2) you have had the consent form explained to you, (3) you have had your questions answered, and (4) you have decided to be in the research study. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

21. Participant Feedback Survey

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln wants to know about your research experience. This 14 question, multiple-choice survey is anonymous. This survey should be completed after your participation in this research. Please complete the optional survey at: <http://bit.ly/UNLresearchfeedback>.

Participant Name:

(Name of Participant: Please print)

Participant Signature:

Signature of Research Participant

Date

Appendix B: Staff Interview Protocol

Date	
Time/ Duration	
Location/ District	
Interviewer	
Participant (Pseudonym & Pronoun)	
Introduction/ Instructions	<p>“Good morning/afternoon [research participant pseudonym]. I hope you are doing well today. My name is Nika, and I will be interviewing you today. I appreciate you taking the time to participate.</p> <p>Before we begin, I would like to confirm that you know what we say here will be recorded and that you are still willing to voluntarily participate. Do I have your permission to record this interview and are you willing to participate in this interview?”</p> <p>[If they respond “No,”]... “Thank you so much for your time. You do not need to answer any further questions.”</p> <p>[If they respond “Yes,” start recording device]... “Thank you so much for your time. In this study, I would like to learn about access to support services for students that are homeless or have been homeless in the past, and how that impacts their scores on state standardized tests. Please remember, you may choose not to answer any question or choose to stop the interview at any time. This interview will take between 45 and 60 minutes of your time. Do you have any questions before we begin?”</p> <p>[If they respond “Yes,”]... [Answer their questions then continue with script below].</p> <p>[If they respond “No”]... “Thank you. Let’s begin.”</p>
Demographic Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is your job title? 2. How long have you been in your current position? 3. How long have you been employed in the district? 4. Does your district employ a Homeless Liaison or have an individual in an equivalent position? If so, what is that individual’s formal job title? A Homeless Liaison is defined as: an individual who serves as the primary contact between homeless families and the school, and coordinates services for homeless and high mobility (HHM) students.

<p>Defining HHM Questions</p>	<p>5. How does your district define the term <i>homeless</i>? Where can this definition be located?</p> <p>6. How does your district define the term <i>high mobility</i>? Where can this definition be located?</p> <p>7. If the district does not have its own definitions for <i>homeless</i> and <i>high mobility</i>, which definitions does the district use?</p> <p>8. If the district does not have its own definitions for <i>homeless</i> and <i>high mobility</i>, why do you think that is?</p> <p>9. Do you think the district could benefit from developing its own definitions for <i>homeless</i> and <i>high mobility</i>? Why or why not?</p>
<p>Funding for HHM Students Questions</p>	<p>10. Does your district receive McKinney-Vento funding to support HHM students? If so, please provide estimates starting with academic year 2021-22 and going back to 2016-17.</p> <p>11. Does the McKinney-Vento funding your district receives cover the cost of providing services for all HHM students? If not, where does the additional required funding come from in the district budget?</p>
<p>HHM Rate Questions</p>	<p>12. Starting with academic year 2021-22 and going back to 2016-17, can you provide me with estimates of the number of HHM students in your district each year? If applicable, please provide me with both beginning of the year and end of year numbers.</p> <p>13. Was there a noticeable change in the number of HHM students enrolled in your district pre and post the start of the COVID-19 pandemic during academic year 2019-20? If so, please describe what changed compared to previous years.</p> <p>14. Based on your personal experience and knowledge, what are some possible factors that contribute to the HHM rate in your district?</p>
<p>Support Services Questions</p>	<p>15. What is the process in your district for 1) identifying students as HHM, and 2) referring them for services? <i>Prompt: Can you walk me through the steps of the referral process and all of the individuals involved in coordinating services?</i></p> <p>16. Once a student has been identified as HHM, which</p>

	<p>faculty/staff are made aware of that designation?</p> <p>17. Is there any sort of verification process to determine eligibility for support services?</p> <p>18. Once a student has been identified as HHM, what are the next steps?</p> <p>19. Does the district charge HHM students or their families for any of the support services they are provided or referred for? If so, which?</p> <p>20. What support services does the district offer for its HHM students? Please list every service and/or resource you are aware of within the district.</p>
<p>Standardized Assessment Questions</p>	<p>[Interject]... “The following set of questions is based on the state standardized assessment data I received for HHM students in your district, from 2016-2022 for both English Language Arts and Mathematics. The following four questions will be based off of the aggregated HHM student assessment data and trends included in the packet before you.” [Hand out a copy of graphs/assessment data for the district].</p> <p>21. Please take a few moments to look at the page with English Language Arts scores. What do you notice are the trends in your district for HHM students in English Language Arts from 2016-2022?</p> <p>22. Based on your personal experience and knowledge, can you provide me with some possible reasons why you believe your district is seeing these trends?</p> <p>23. Please take a few moments to look at the page with Mathematics scores. What do you notice are the trends in your district for HHM students in Mathematics from 2016-2022?</p> <p>24. Based on your personal experience and knowledge, can you provide me with some possible reasons why you believe your district is seeing these trends?</p> <p>25. Do students identified as HHM receive any automatic/blanket accommodations and/or modifications when taking state standardized assessments? If so, what are they?</p> <p>26. Once the district receives HHM state standardized assessment data, what does the district do with the data?</p>

	<p>Prompt: <i>What does the administrative team do with the assessment data? What do teachers do with the data?</i></p> <p>27. How is academic achievement for HHM students tracked?</p>
<p>Thank You Statement</p>	<p>“This is the end of the interview. Do you have any questions or comments before we finish?”</p> <p>[If they respond “Yes,”]... [Answer their questions then continue with script below].</p> <p>[If they respond “No,”]... “Thank you again for your time. I greatly appreciate your participation. I will contact you in the next few days for the member checking session where I will ask you to review the interview transcripts to make sure all of your answers look correct. If you need to contact me, my cell phone number and email are listed on the copy of the consent form you signed. Thank you!” [Turn off recording device]</p>

Appendix C: Survey of District and Community Support Services

Date Distributed	
Location/District	
Participant (Pseudonym)	
Date Received	
Instructions	<p>This Survey of District and Community Support Services consists of 2 Parts. Please complete this worksheet in private, and on your own time and email it back within two weeks of receipt.</p> <p><u>Instructions For Part 1 (to be completed first):</u> Please use the following table to document all of the support services, which you are aware of, that are currently available to HHM students both within the district as well as out in the community. Please fill out Boxes 1-5 for each individual support service. Box 1 asks for the name of the service (e.g. Goodwill) and to list the type of service it is (e.g. Clothing) or fill in “Other” if it does not fit in one of the types listed. Box 2 asks for the location of where the service can be accessed (e.g. Community). Box 3 asks for all available contact information you have for that service. If the service is provided in the district, you can write “District.” Box 4 asks for the duration, or either the length of time the district has offered the service or the length of time the service has been available in the community, if known. Box 5 asks for a brief description of what the service is and how it is utilized. *You may use the Internet and any other available resource to complete the table.</p> <p><u>Instructions For Part 2 (to be completed last):</u> After you have completed Part 1, please complete Part 2. Please brainstorm a list of potential support services that you believe are missing from the district and community, and if added, could provide a benefit for HHM students. *Once you have completed both parts, I will conduct my own survey of support services and add on, if necessary. After I complete my portion, I will ask for you to participate in another round of member checking. If you run out of room and need additional pages, please add another page to the document by highlighting the table and copy/pasting it onto a new page. Please contact me if you need additional assistance or clarification.*</p>

Part 1

(1) Name/Type (Housing, Financial, Food, Clothing, Transportation, Health, Mental Health, Legal, Academic, or Other):	(2) Location (District, Community, or Both):	(3) Contact Information:	(4) Duration:	(5) Brief Description:
(1) Name/Type (Housing, Financial, Food, Clothing, Transportation, Health, Mental Health, Legal, Academic, or Other):	(2) Location (District, Community, or Both):	(3) Contact Information:	(4) Duration:	(5) Brief Description:
(1) Name/Type (Housing, Financial, Food, Clothing, Transportation, Health, Mental Health, Legal, Academic, or Other):	(2) Location (District, Community, or Both):	(3) Contact Information:	(4) Duration:	(5) Brief Description:

Part 2

Type of Service:	Brief Description (Explain why this service may benefit HHM students if added):
Type of Service:	Brief Description (Explain why this service may benefit HHM students if added):
Type of Service:	Brief Description (Explain why this service may benefit HHM students if added):
Type of Service:	Brief Description (Explain why this service may benefit HHM students if added):

Appendix D: SPSS Data Outputs

Notes

Output Created		22-MAR-2023 09:31:12
Comments		
Input	Data	/Users/veronikamm/Documents/*PhD Educational Studies/*Dissertation/Alpha and Beta SPSS Data.sav
	Active Dataset	DataSet1
	Filter	<none>
	Weight	<none>
	Split File	<none>
	N of Rows in Working Data File	102
Missing Value Handling	Definition of Missing	User defined missing values are treated as missing.
	Cases Used	All non-missing data are used.
Syntax		DESCRIPTIVES VARIABLES=District Year Student_Label ELA_Score Math_Score ACTComposite_Score ELA_Proficient Math_Proficient ACT_Proficient Student_Grade Student_Sex Student_Race Current_Services_2023 Total_Services /STATISTICS=MEAN STDDEV VARIANCE RANGE MIN MAX.
Resources	Processor Time	00:00:00.03
	Elapsed Time	00:00:00.00

Notes

Output Created		22-MAR-2023 09:47:14
Comments		
Input	Data	/Users/veronikamm/Documents/*PhD Educational Studies/*Dissertation/Alpha and Beta SPSS Data.sav
	Active Dataset	DataSet1
	Filter	<none>
	Weight	<none>
	Split File	District ID
	N of Rows in Working Data File	102
Missing Value Handling	Definition of Missing	User defined missing values are treated as missing.
	Cases Used	All non-missing data are used.
Syntax		DESCRIPTIVES VARIABLES=District Year Student_Label ELA_Score Math_Score ACTComposite_Score ELA_Proficient Math_Proficient ACT_Proficient Student_Grade Student_Sex Student_Race Current_Services_2023 Total_Services /STATISTICS=MEAN STDDEV VARIANCE RANGE MIN MAX.
Resources	Processor Time	00:00:00.03
	Elapsed Time	00:00:00.00

Notes

Output Created		22-MAR-2023 09:51:05
Comments		

Input	Data	/Users/veronikamm/Documents/*PhD Educational Studies/*Dissertation/Gamma FINAL SPSS Data.sav
	Active Dataset	DataSet2
	Filter	<none>
	Weight	<none>
	Split File	<none>
	N of Rows in Working Data File	2131
Missing Value Handling	Definition of Missing	User defined missing values are treated as missing.
	Cases Used	All non-missing data are used.
Syntax		DESCRIPTIVES VARIABLES=Year StudentLabel ELAScore MathScore ELAProficient MathProficient Student_Grade Student_Sex Student_Race Current_Services_2023 Total_Services /STATISTICS=MEAN STDDEV VARIANCE RANGE MIN MAX.
Resources	Processor Time	00:00:00.02
	Elapsed Time	00:00:00.00

Notes

Output Created		22-MAR-2023 09:52:41
Comments		
Input	Data	/Users/veronikamm/Documents/*PhD Educational Studies/*Dissertation/Gamma FINAL SPSS Data.sav

	Active Dataset Filter	DataSet2	
	Weight	<none>	
	Split File	<none>	
	N of Rows in Working Data File		2131
Missing Value Handling	Definition of Missing	User defined missing values are treated as missing.	
	Cases Used	All non-missing data are used.	
Syntax		DESCRIPTIVES VARIABLES=Year StudentLabel ELAScore MathScore ELAProficient MathProficient Student_Grade Student_Sex Student_Race Current_Services_2023 Total_Services /STATISTICS=MEAN STDDEV VARIANCE RANGE MIN MAX.	
Resources	Processor Time		00:00:00.02
	Elapsed Time		00:00:00.00

Descriptives

Notes

Output Created		22-MAR-2023 10:22:52
Comments		
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	Active Dataset Filter	DataSet1 <none>

	Weight	<none>
	Split File	District ID
	N of Rows in Working Data File	102
Missing Value Handling	Definition of Missing	User defined missing values are treated as missing.
	Cases Used	All non-missing data are used.
Syntax		DESCRIPTIVES VARIABLES=District Year Student_Label ELA_Score Math_Score ACTComposite_Score ELA_Proficient Math_Proficient ACT_Proficient Student_Grade Student_Sex Student_Race Current_Services_2023 Total_Services /STATISTICS=MEAN STDDEV VARIANCE RANGE MIN MAX.
Resources	Processor Time	00:00:00.03
	Elapsed Time	00:00:00.00

[DataSet1] /Users/veronikamm/Documents/*PhD Educational Studies/*Dissertation/Alpha and Beta SPSS Data.sav

Descriptive Statistics

District ID		N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Alpha	District ID	3	.00	1.00	1.00	1.0000	.00000	.000
	Assessment Year	3	4.00	2.00	6.00	3.7812	1.89625	3.596
	Student Label	3	31.00	71.00	102.00	86.5000	9.38083	88.000
	ELA Score	2	1447.0	1105.00	2552.00	2390.190	302.4441	91472.46
		1	0			5	5	2

	Math Score	21	1284.00	1050.00	2334.00	1223.1429	262.59023	68953.629
	ACT Composite Score	11	4.00	12.00	16.00	13.2727	1.42063	2.018
	ELA Proficiency	21	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.9048	.30079	.090
	Math Proficiency	21	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.8571	.35857	.129
	ACT Proficiency	0						
	Grade	32	8.00	3.00	11.00	7.3125	3.09461	9.577
	Sex	32	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.4063	.49899	.249
	Race	32	.00	4.00	4.00	4.0000	.00000	.000
	Current District Services 2023	32	.00	10.00	10.00	10.0000	.00000	.000
	District & Community Services	32	.00	25.00	25.00	25.0000	.00000	.000
	Valid N (listwise)	0						
Beta	District ID	70	.00	2.00	2.00	2.0000	.00000	.000
	Assessment Year	70	2.00	3.00	5.00	4.1143	.84344	.711
	Student Label	70	69.00	1.00	70.00	35.5000	20.35109	414.167
	ELA Score	100	294.00	2307.00	2601.00	2455.0000	98.51565	9705.333
	Math Score	100	198.00	1078.00	1276.00	1153.3000	62.48742	3904.678
	ACT Composite Score	2	1.00	13.00	14.00	13.5000	.70711	.500
	ELA Proficiency	10	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.7000	.48305	.233
	Math Proficiency	10	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.9000	.31623	.100
	ACT Proficiency	2	.00	2.00	2.00	2.0000	.00000	.000

Grade	70	12.00	1.00	13.00	6.9429	4.06072	16.489
Sex	70	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.6714	.47309	.224
Race	70	6.00	1.00	7.00	3.1857	1.98759	3.951
Current District Services 2023	70	.00	11.00	11.00	11.0000	.00000	.000
District & Community Services	70	.00	15.00	15.00	15.0000	.00000	.000
Valid N (listwise)	0						

Descriptives

Notes

Output Created		22-MAR-2023 10:48:51
Comments		
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	Filter	<none>
	Weight	<none>
	Split File	<none>
	N of Rows in Working Data File	2143
Missing Value Handling	Definition of Missing	User defined missing values are treated as missing.
	Cases Used	All non-missing data are used.
Syntax		DESCRIPTIVES VARIABLES=Year StudentLabel ELAScore MathScore

		ELAProficient MathProficient Student_Grade Student_Sex Student_Race Current_Services_2023 Total_Services /STATISTICS=MEAN STDDEV VARIANCE RANGE MIN MAX.
Resources	Processor Time	00:00:00.02
	Elapsed Time	00:00:00.00

[DataSet2] /Users/veronikamm/Documents/*PhD Educational Studies/*Dissertation/Gamma FINAL SPSS Data.sav

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Assessment Year	2131	3	3	6	4.94	1.234
Student Label	2131	84897	963	85860	66448.45	11598.973
ELA Score	2124	372	354	726	464.33	62.812
Math Score	2125	415	305	720	460.18	59.018
ELA Proficiency	2124	1	1	2	1.56	.496
Math Proficiency	2125	1	1	2	1.62	.485
Grade	2131	9	3	12	6.69	2.523
Sex	2131	2	1	3	1.54	.517
Race	2131	6	1	7	2.25	1.958
Current District Services 2023	2131	.00	18.00	18.00	18.0000	.00000
District & Community Services	2131	.00	155.00	155.00	155.0000	.00000
Valid N (listwise)	2121					

Appendix E: MAXQDA Codebook

1 Identifying HHM Students	1
1.1 Enrollment Process	4
1.2 several strategies	1
1.3 Ask questions at registration	2
1.4 Train staff	1
1.5 Refer for Services	2
1.6 Reserve judgment	1
1.7 Catching students at the door	1
1.8 Public announcements	1
1.9 Verification process	1
1.10 Some take advantage	1
1.11 Ask a lot of questions	1
1.12 Ongoing constant communication	1
2 Obstacles to obtaining services	1
2.1 Capacity of physical space	1
2.2 Capacity of financial resources	1
2.3 Capacity of individuals	1
2.4 Maintain student confidentiality	1
3 Tracking HHM Academic Progress	2
3.1 Classroom assessments by teachers	1
3.2 MAP test	1
3.2.1 Formative assessment	1
3.2.1.1 Feedback is instantaneous	1
3.3 Tracked through PLCs	1
3.4 the classroom	1
3.5 ACT test	2
3.5.1 Summative assessment	1
3.6 grades	1
3.7 standardized tests,	2
3.7.1 Not all grades tested	1
3.7.2 Future adapting of the state test	1
3.7.3 Summative	1
3.7.3.1 Feedback isn't instantaneous	1
3.7.3.1.1 Results become irrelevant	1
3.8 Same as every other student	1

4 Accommodations/modifications for HHM	2
4.1 IEPs	1
4.2 No blanket accommodations/modifications	2
4.3 No automatic accommodations	1
4.4 Don't make assumptions	1
5 Analyzing HHM student assessment data	3
5.1 Various types of assessment tools	1
5.2 Adjust instruction	1
5.3 Adjust interventions	2
5.3.1 Weekly basis	1
5.4 Address deficiencies	1
5.5 Tutoring services	1
5.6 MTSS process	2
5.6.1 Varying tiers of interventions	1
5.7 Explanation of assessment trends	1
5.7.1 family dysfunction	1
5.7.2 attendance issues	1
5.7.3 mobility,	1
5.8 complex nuanced conversation	4
5.8.1 PLCs	2
5.8.1.1 PLC makeup	1
5.8.1.2 Problem solving	1
5.8.1.3 Review student assessment data in PLC	1
5.9 No direct application to HHM students	1
5.10 Bring to buildings, grades & classrooms	1
5.11 Schools analyze data	1
5.12 Graph student progress	1
5.13 Continuous assessment	1
5.14 Goal setting	1
5.15 Celebrate growth	1
6 ACT Data Trends	1
6.1 Average scores not very high	1
7 Partner with government agencies for support and resources	3
7.1 External agencies	1

7.2 Internal agencies	1
7.3 Provide additional services the district can't provide	1
7.4 The food bank	1
7.5 Any type of support services	1
7.6 Community Action	1
7.7 local law enforcement liaison officer	1
7.8 Law enforcement	3
7.9 Department of Human Services	3
7.10 Social Services	2
8 Increase in ethnic diversity	1
8.1 Increase in Polynesian student population	1
9 Title Services	2
9.1 Title IV	1
9.2 Title V	1
9.3 Title II	1
9.4 Title I	2
10 Satisfaction with status quo	3
10.1 Open to change/improvement	1
11 Unique Situation	7
11.1 Tailoring situations based on circumstances	1
11.2 That's how we do it	1
11.3 case by case basis	6
12 Job title	3
12.1 No homeless liaison position	1
12.2 Director of student services	1
12.3 New to position	1
12.4 Liaison coordinator	1
12.5 Homeless liaison position	2
12.5.1 Liaison Job Responsibilities	1
12.5.2 Definition of Homeless Liaison	0
12.6 Length of tenure	4
12.6.1 Veteran	3
12.7 Superintendent	4
12.7.1 Multiple hats	2

13 COVID	2
14 Assessment data trends	4
14.1 Explanation of positive trends and increases	3
14.1.1 Smaller class sizes	1
14.1.2 Classes cater to their needs	1
14.1.3 Services provided	1
14.1.4 PBIS	1
14.1.5 MTSS	1
14.1.6 professional development	1
14.1.7 very large staff	1
14.1.8 extra help	1
14.1.9 access to teachers	1
14.1.10 More independent study	1
14.1.11 Pandemic relief funding	2
14.1.12 Hired more staff	1
14.1.13 Purchase additional programs	1
14.1.14 Smaller class sizes	1
14.1.15 Adding social/emotional skills programs	2
14.1.16 more intervention	1
14.1.17 Offer more tutoring	1
14.1.18 individualized attention	2
14.1.19 more support for the families	1
14.1.20 Highly linguistically diverse district	1
14.1.21 Trauma-based supports	1
14.2 Explanation of negative assessment trends and decreases	1
14.2.1 Decline in engagement and connectedness	1
14.2.2 a decline in face-to-face learning	1
14.2.3 COVID negatively affects assessment performance	2
14.2.4 Attendance issues	4
14.2.5 Situations exacerbate themselves	1
14.2.5.1 Transportation, attendance, and performance issues	1
14.2.6 Transportation Issues	1
14.2.6.1 No transportation services to the	1

Reservation	
14.2.6.2 High proportion of option enrolled students	1
14.2.7 disruption in learning	2
14.2.8 High mobility results in decreased performance	1
14.2.9 Blue collar families moving in and out	1
14.3 Guessing not supported with data	1
14.4 Math Data Trends	3
14.4.1 Math scores decrease	1
14.4.2 Math proficiency increase	3
14.4.3 Math score increase	2
14.5 ELA Data Trends	5
14.5.1 ELA score decrease	2
14.5.2 Small ELA Score decrease	1
14.5.3 ELA score increase	1
15 Community involvement	2
16 School staff involvement	4
16.1 Trust the capacity of colleagues	1
16.2 Staff collaborate	1
16.3 Multiple teachers	2
16.4 Grade-level teacher	1
16.5 Principal	2
16.6 Counselor	2
16.7 First contact	1
16.8 finance department	1
16.9 liaison	2
16.9.1 Pay for liaison overtime	1
16.10 family support coordinator	1
16.11 ESL department	1
17 equity department	1
18 Special Ed	1
19 Support Services in school	3
19.1 Mental health services	2
19.2 How to make the most impact?	1
19.3 How to best serve the child educationally?	1

19.4 How to provide personal security for HHM students?	1
19.5 How to provide support for HHM students?	1
19.6 it flushes itself out	1
19.7 Provide supports	1
19.8 Food services	4
19.8.1 COVID funds for snacks	1
19.8.2 Teachers provide snacks	1
19.8.3 Holiday food celebrations	1
19.9 Education services	1
19.9.1 Provide tutoring services	2
19.9.1.1 One-on-one tutoring	1
19.10 Transportation services	5
19.10.1 Example of schools providing transportation services	2
19.11 Cost of services	1
19.11.1 No charge for support services rendered in school	2
19.11.2 No cost for services	2
19.12 Clothing Services	4
19.13 Community donations	1
19.14 Free meals	2
19.15 Make referrals	1
19.16 Parenting classes	1
19.17 Washing clothing	1
19.18 Childcare	2
19.19 Cover a whole range of services	1
19.20 Doctor's appointments	1
19.21 Interpreter services	1
19.22 Stress importance of funding	1
20 Causes of Homelessness	3
20.1 Increased as a result of COVID	3
20.2 Natural disasters	1
20.3 Nomadic lifestyle	2
20.3.1 Blue-collar industries/jobs	2
20.3.1.1 Seaboard Foods	2

20.3.1.2 Tyson Foods	1
20.4 Economic troubles	1
20.4.1 Job loss	2
20.4.2 Financial hardship	1
20.5 lack terminal degrees	1
20.6 lack trade or skill	1
20.7 high cost of housing	1
20.8 Difficulty buying a home	1
20.9 Low salary compared to rent rates	1
21 Student enrollment	1
22 McKinney-Vento Funding	3
22.1 Allocating MVA funds	1
22.1.1 Insufficient funding	1
22.2 39-41K Annually	1
22.3 \$100 allocated to support HHM students	1
22.4 General fund monies	2
22.5 Federal funding	2
22.5.1 Money under Title I	2
22.5.2 American Rescue Plan Funding	1
22.6 Unutilized money	2
22.7 No funding	1
22.8 district funds	1
22.9 equity department funding	1
23 HHM Rate	5
23.1 HHM rate increase after COVID	3
23.2 Higher proportion of HHM students are ethnically diverse	1
23.3 Homelessness is a rare occurrence	2
24 Cultural	2
25 Family/ Families	6
25.1 Relationships with kids	1
25.2 Connect to children and their families	1
25.3 HHM students remain connected to family	1
25.4 Dysfunctional situation	1
25.4.1 More students dealing with increased challenges	1

25.4.2 Challenging situations	1
25.4.2.1 Universal problem	1
25.5 Foster family	1
25.6 Communication	3
25.6.1 Communication with parents	3
25.6.2 Principal and staff role	1
25.6.2.1 2 issues at the core	1
25.6.2.1.1 Issue 2 being successful at school	1
25.6.2.1.2 Issue 1 getting to school regularly	1
25.6.3 face-to-face communication	3
25.6.4 Gain anecdotal or narrative information	3
26 Prioritizing	2
27 Mobility Rate	3
28 Policies and procedures	13
28.1 Informal process/procedures in place	4
28.1.1 Less formality in a small school	1
28.2 Defining high mobility	4
28.2.1 District has its own definition	1
28.2.1.1 Track HHM student attendance	1
28.3 Defining homelessness	5
28.3.1 Funding	1
28.3.2 Limit Confusion	1
28.3.2.1 Alignment with MVA	2
28.3.3 Housed on district website	2
28.3.4 Defer to MVA	1
28.3.4.1 Ensure alignment with MVA	1
28.3.5 Defer to state regarding definition	4
28.4 Data analysis of HHM student test scores	1