

## The Hope Chest Virginia

A quarterly newsletter from Project-HOPE VA

May 2023

### Summer Summit Conference

- Do you want to hear more ideas of how school divisions are using their ARP-HCY funds? Do you need help making a plan to ensure the funds are fully expended and to develop a way to sustain efforts beyond the ARP-HCY grant?
- Wherever you ARP in your journey, this summit is for you! Click below to register for the Summer Summit
- June 15, 2023, Staunton, VA

### Upcoming Training Events

- May 9, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. & May 10, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. (repeat)
- Liaisons can email [homlss@wm.edu](mailto:homlss@wm.edu) for the registration link.
- \*No June Check-ins due to ARP-HCY Summer Summit.\*

For more information on upcoming training and professional development opportunities, click [here](#).

### ARP-HCY Spotlight: Rockingham Co. Public Schools

ARP-HCY funds awarded to Rockingham County Public Schools were used in a way that will directly impact the lives of children staying at First Step, a domestic violence shelter located in Harrisonburg. More than meeting the basic needs of these children, this purchase allows them get outside, have fun and learn through play. To find out more about this project, click [here](#).

## Spotlight: Camp Eager

For a third consecutive summer, William & Mary (W&M) faculty, STEM undergraduate students of color and preservice teachers are teaming up with Newport News Public Schools (NNPS) science and math teachers to conduct a three-week experimental summer camp. Camp EAGER explores innovative ways to encourage middle and high school students from underrepresented groups, primarily girls and youth of color, to pursue STEM careers.

W&M STEM undergraduates serve as mentors to students, working alongside NNPS teachers in the classroom. W&M preservice teachers also participate as part of their summer coursework.

The curriculum is culturally relevant, prioritizing social connection and social-emotional well-being. Every day includes team building and reflection time, mentorship between students and undergraduates as well as hands-on activities that engage students in collaborative problem-solving and the engineering design process.

Camp Eager also has a collaborative research component. W&M and NNPS staff are studying: 1) the influence of camp on students' engagement and interest in STEM; 2) undergraduate mentors' capacity to support marginalized secondary students; and 3) preservice teachers' abilities to work with diverse students. For more information about Camp EAGER, [click here](#).

## Hope Hero: Dr. Bruce Copeland

We recently had the chance to sit down with the Hampton City Public Schools Coordinator of School Social Work Services and McKinney-Vento Liaison, Dr. Bruce Copeland. Dr. Copeland talked about the full-day training event held last summer in his district to inform and inspire local staff about McKinney-Vento rights and services. Attendees learned about the incredible impact they can have on students and families experiencing homelessness because of their unique role. Dr. Copeland used ARP-HCY funding to pay for this training and plans to host another full-day event this summer. Click here to view this interview: [link](#).

## End of Year Letter

Did you know rights under McKinney-Vento extend through the remainder of the school year in which permanent housing is established. Since many of our

students' living situations change frequently, these situations should be reassessed prior to or at the beginning of each school year. As we approach the end of another school year, you may consider sending an End-of-Year letter to caretakers to inform them of the procedures in your school division for reapplying for eligibility and continued enrollment. We have included a template you can use – feel free to modify this letter to meet the needs of your school division! Click here for template: [link](#).

### Underserved Populations: Spotlight on English Learners

An article in the previous issue of The Hope Chest - Virginia outlined the impact of homelessness and disability on student academic achievement, specifically in terms of high school graduation rates. In this publication, we examine the effect of another combination of reporting categories, homelessness and English learners (EL), on graduation rates and offer resources for educators serving these students.

Researchers have identified not earning a high school diploma as one of the most significant consequences of experiencing homelessness during K-12 education (Hatch, 2022; Murphy & Tobin, 2011). According to Virginia Federal Graduation Indicator data, 88.99% of the general population, in contrast with 67.06% of students experiencing homelessness and 69.24% of English learners, earned diplomas in the 2021- 2022 school year (Virginia Department of Education [VDOE], n.d.). Graduation rates were even lower for students experiencing homelessness who also were learning English at 40.34%.

The figure on the left represents disaggregated average graduation rates that the VDOE (n.d.) has been collecting since 2008. There is a striking difference in achievement between all students and students who are experiencing homelessness or learning English. However, the graduation rate of students in both reporting categories underscores the significant challenges such student face and the need for extra resources and support.

The same data, organized and presented differently in the figure on the right,

again highlights the significant consequences of homelessness and learning English both individually and together on high school graduation. While the disparity in graduation rate among English Learners experiencing homelessness compared to the base population is striking, there are promising practices happening in Virginia that support the success of these learners.

Using their ARP-HCY funds, Fairfax County Public Schools hired a Bilingual Social Worker, Claudia McDowell, who works with EL students and families experiencing excessive attendance issues, after traditional methods for addressing attendance have been exhausted. Families with the most complex and hardest to navigate barriers are assigned to Claudia. Often these cases involve meeting the incredibly complex needs of both parents and student, e.g. student mental health, severe basic needs, legal issues, immigration challenges, etc. Kathi Sheffel, the Homeless and Foster Care Liaison in Fairfax shared, "The Bilingual Social Worker can really stay with the parent all along the journey until they are connected to the right resources. This social worker exercises persistence by weaving through barriers in multiple systems to create enough stability where parents can get these kids to school." Claudia can dedicate her time to assisting parents, who otherwise feel overwhelmed in navigating a truly foreign process.

In Loudoun County Public Schools, McKinney-Vento Liaison Specialist, Holly Angle, and her team work to ensure EL students have the academic and social supports they need to succeed. They are currently in the process of hiring part-time teacher-as-tutor positions using a portion of their ARP-HCY funds. EL high school students will make up a significant number of the students these tutors will support. Additionally, Holly's team regularly meets with EL high schoolers, along with their counselor or social worker, to provide tiered support and educate them about their rights and available resources. Support for Loudoun students experiencing homelessness does not end when school is out. Holly also has used her APR-HCY funds to enroll 45 students in two weeks of summer camp; this includes Coding Camp and DAZE Camp, which comprises activities around science

and nature, arts and crafts, cooking, and more. Many of these camp attendees are EL learners or newcomers who will be able to get a head start becoming immersed in school.

**If you are doing exciting work to support  
English Learners in your area,  
please email [homlss@wm.edu](mailto:homlss@wm.edu) to share your story!**

Resources to explore other methods for supporting EL learners and their families include:

- Resources to Support Immigrant and Migrant Students
- Supporting the Education of Immigrant Students Experiencing Homelessness
- A Guide for Engaging ELL Families: 20 Strategies for School Leaders
- ELL Starter Kit for Educators

## **References**

Hatch, E., Villagrana, K., Wu, Q., Lawler, S., & Ferguson, K. (2022). Predictors of Secondary Completion Among Homeless Youth in Three U.S. Cities and the Potential Application of National Policies. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 39, 347-359.

Murphy, J.F. & Tobin, K.J. (2011). How Homeless Children and Youth Can Succeed: Researchers and Advocates Have Identified Successful Strategies for School Enrolling Homeless Students. *Phi Delta Kappa*, 93(3), 32-37.

Virginia Department of Education (n.d.). *Cohort graduation build-a-table*. Virginia department of education.

[https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/apex\\_captcha/home.do?apexTypeId=305](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/apex_captcha/home.do?apexTypeId=305)