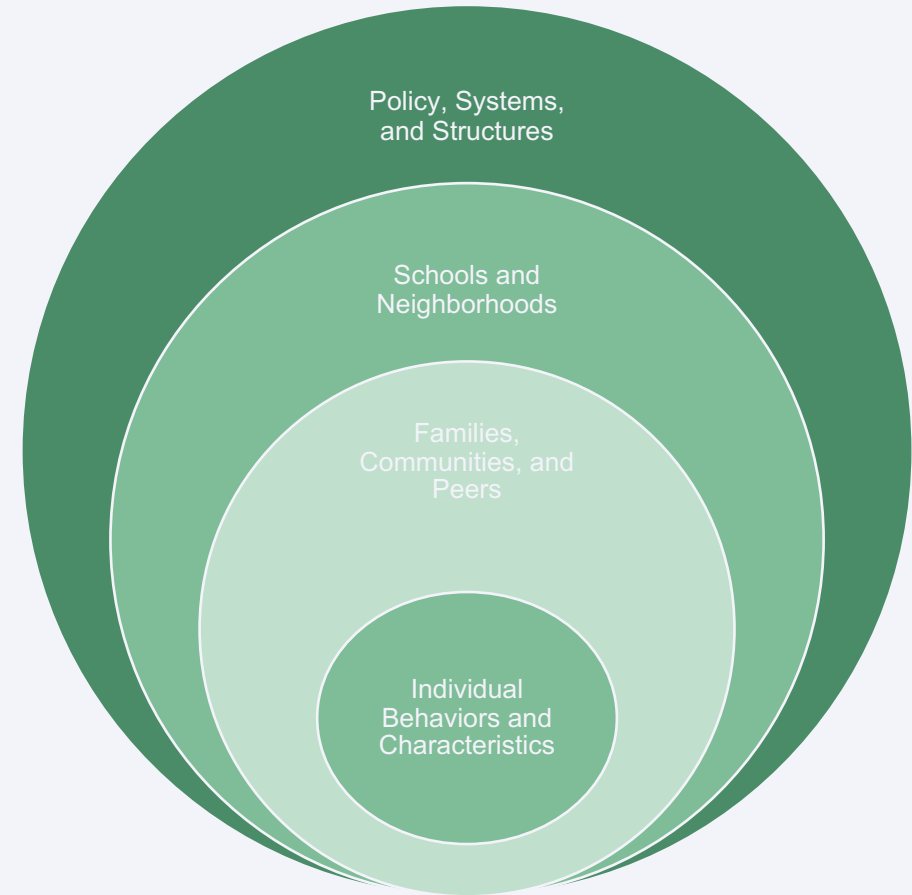


The Missing Link: Housing Instability and Chronic Student Absenteeism

Community Development Week

How We Conceptualize Ed Policy Problems in Detroit

- The most pervasive problems of student enrollment, engagement, and attendance must be understood *ecologically*.
- This means that problems that seem like those of individual behavior or resources likely have roots in systems, policies, communities, and relationships.
- Our work seeks to uncover those root causes and work with our partners to develop research- and community-informed policy solutions, using continuous improvement methods.



Adapted from Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. (2006). The bioecological model of human development. In R. M. Lerner (Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology (volume 1): Theoretical models of human development* (pp. 793–828). John Wiley and Sons Inc.

Chronic Absenteeism

What is it?

Missing 10% or more of enrolled school days, or about 18 days in a regular 180-day school year.

Why does it matter?

- Chronic absenteeism is both a proxy indicator for youth wellness and a contributing factor to future youth success in school.
- This means that how much school Detroit children miss tells us important information about how well their families and communities are doing. It also points toward what schools and social services may need to do to support them.



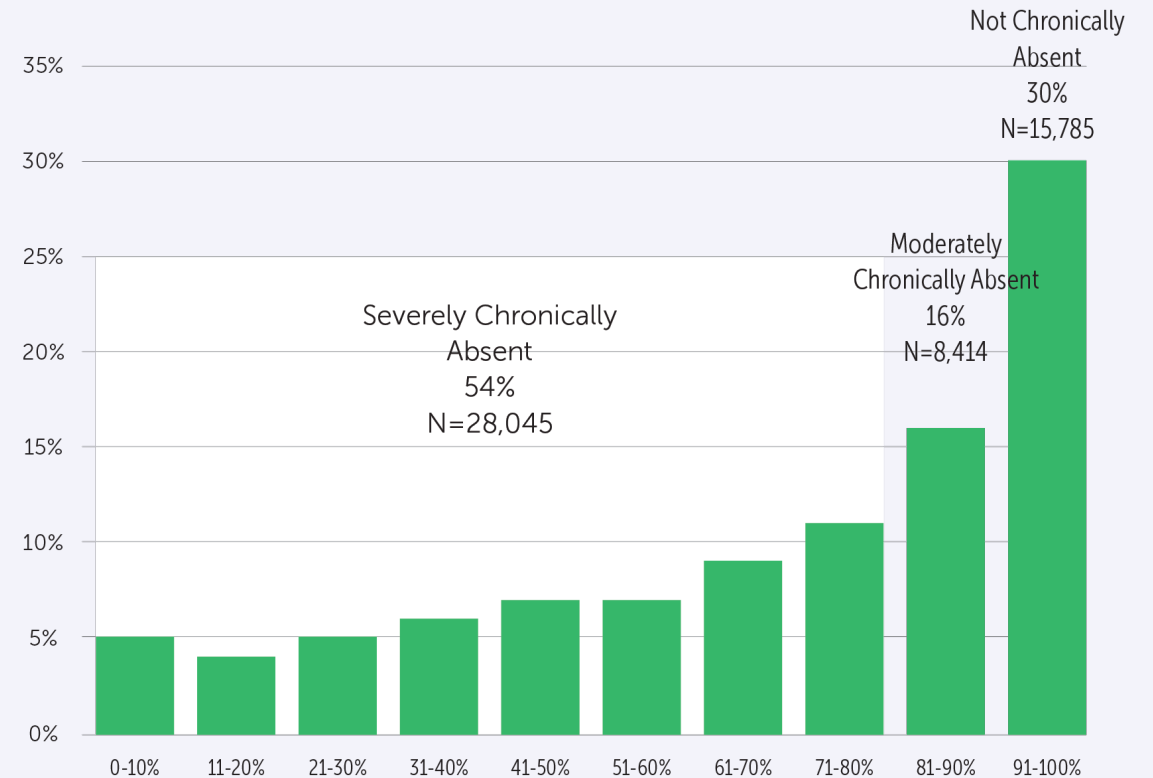
Detroit has

- the highest rate of chronic absence and
- the most challenging barriers to attendance of any major U.S. city

City	Index of Barriers to Attendance	Percent Chronically Absent
Detroit	24.72162	48%
Milwaukee	11.9007	38%
Philadelphia	11.67282	32%
Washington	8.002552	31%
Baltimore	13.3215	30%
Columbus	5.788527	29%
Louisville	7.577746	27%
Tucson	10.1259	26%
Denver	0.8887753	26%
Chicago	8.689734	25%
Portland	1.57965	23%
Albuquerque	5.487221	22%
Seattle	0	21%
Jacksonville	6.663923	21%
Las Vegas	9.524496	21%
Nashville	7.25262	19%
New York	6.992345	19%
Phoenix	9.213021	19%
Boston	6.677701	17%
Oklahoma City	6.404958	16%
Fort Worth	6.305224	16%
Indianapolis	9.676303	15%
Los Angeles	6.238728	14%
San Antonio	6.084514	13%
San Diego	3.53257	12%
Houston	9.595041	12%
El Paso	4.584829	11%
San Jose	1.114888	11%
Austin	5.67772	11%
Dallas	7.383227	11%
Charlotte	6.097585	10%
Fresno	9.178218	8%
San Francisco	2.384977	6%

70% of DPSCD students were chronically absent in the 2020-21 school year, compared to 62% in 2018-19.

54% were severely chronically absent.



Myths about Why Students Miss so Much School in Detroit

- Detroit parents and students don't care about school
- Detroit parents and students don't know the importance of strong attendance
- Detroit families enroll in schools too far away from home
- Detroit schools are not putting enough effort in to increase attendance

Why Students Miss so Much School in Detroit

- Most students do not live within walking distance to school, and 1/3 of Detroit families do not own a car
- Half of Detroit-serving schools offer no transportation for Detroit students
- Nearly 1/4 of Detroit students switch schools each year, making them about 3.5 times more likely to be chronically absent
- Schools under-identify housing unstable students who need transition support

To Better Understand Student Experiences with Housing Instability, We Conducted a Representative Survey of Detroit Students

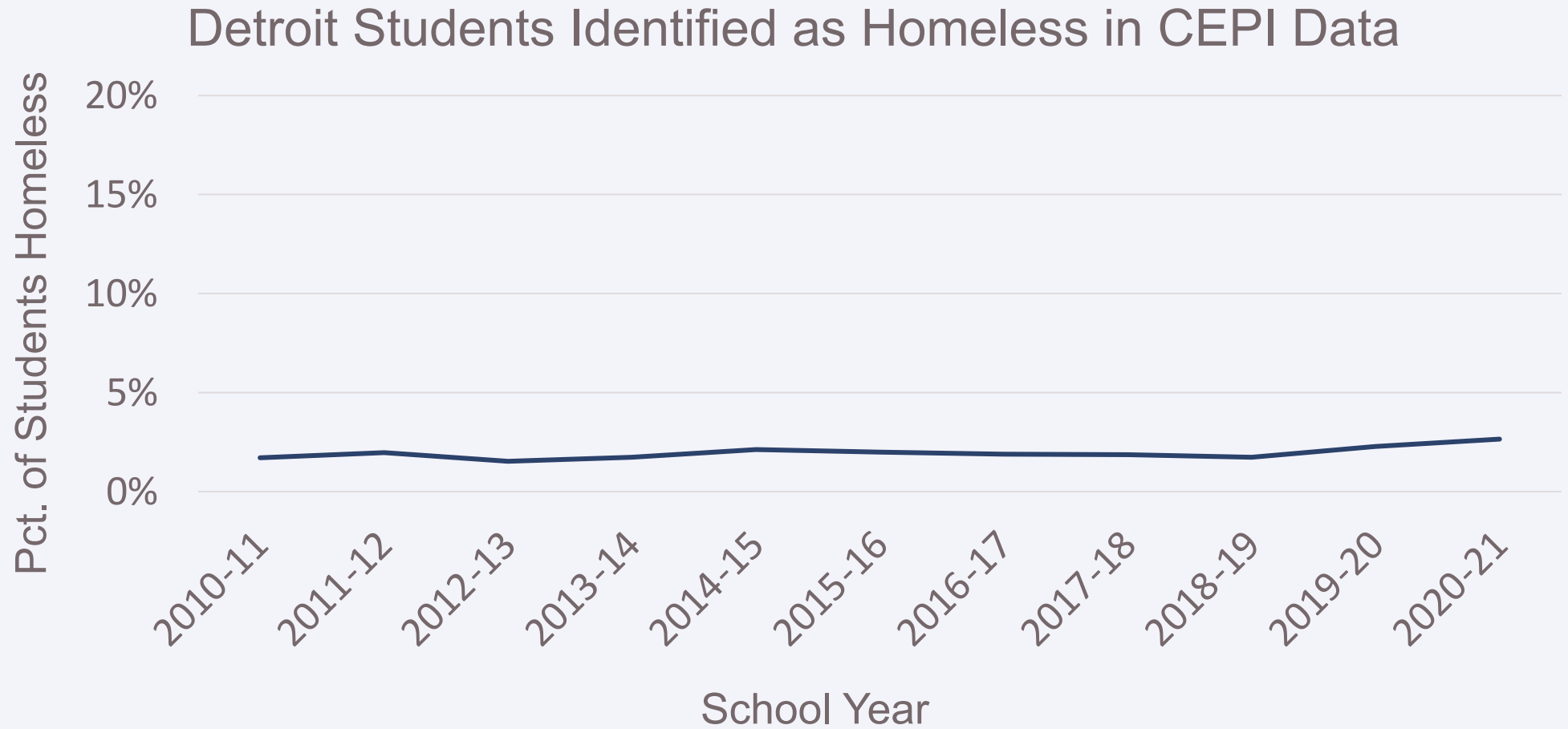
- Survey of students in DPSCD and about 40% of the city's charter schools
 - Survey administered in January 2022
 - Only includes students enrolled in Detroit schools (i.e., not Detroit students enrolled in the suburbs)
- Excludes alternative schools, special education centers, and strict discipline academies (which each may enroll homeless and housing-unstable students as well)

Definitions

- Detroit students: attend a school in Detroit
- Housing Unstable: experiencing homelessness at the time of the survey (January 2022) or evicted in the prior year (2021)
- Homeless or Experiencing Homelessness: living with a family or friend in temporary and/or inadequate circumstances (i.e., doubled up) or in another temporary situation (e.g., motel or hotel, shelter or emergency housing, in a car, in a campground or public place, moving from place to place)

Identification of Housing Unstable Students in Detroit

For over a decade, around 2% of Detroit students have been identified as homeless.



In our survey, we identified 13% of Detroit students as housing unstable.

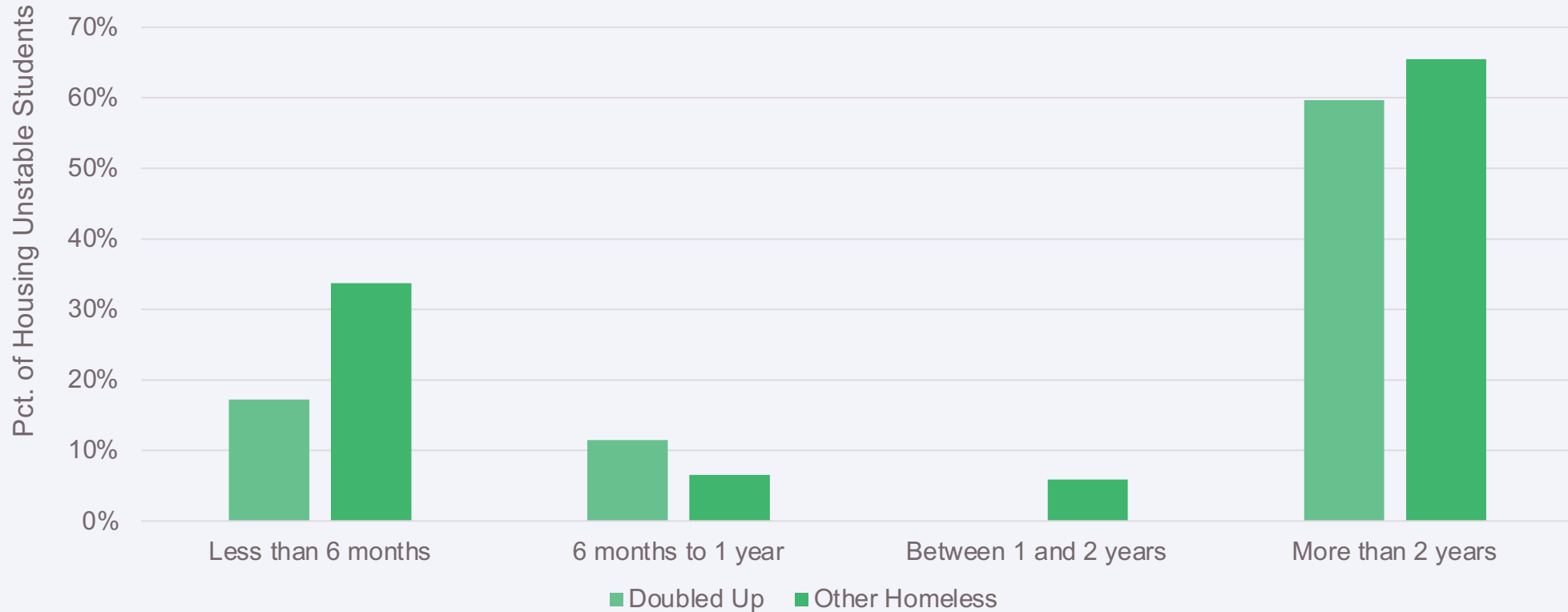
Housing Status	Pct. of Students
Housing Unstable	12.7%
Homeless	7.5%
Other Housing Unstable	5.2%
Stable Housing	87.3%

Most homeless students in Detroit are doubled up.

Housing Type	Pct. of Students
Own	32.9%
Rent	59.6%
“Doubled Up”	5.6%
Other Homeless Situation	1.8%

Many homeless students in Detroit are persistently homeless.

Housing Duration by Housing Type for Housing Unstable Students in Detroit, Jan. 2022



Student and Family Characteristics for Housing Unstable Students

In Detroit, fewer Hispanic students are housing unstable than Black students.

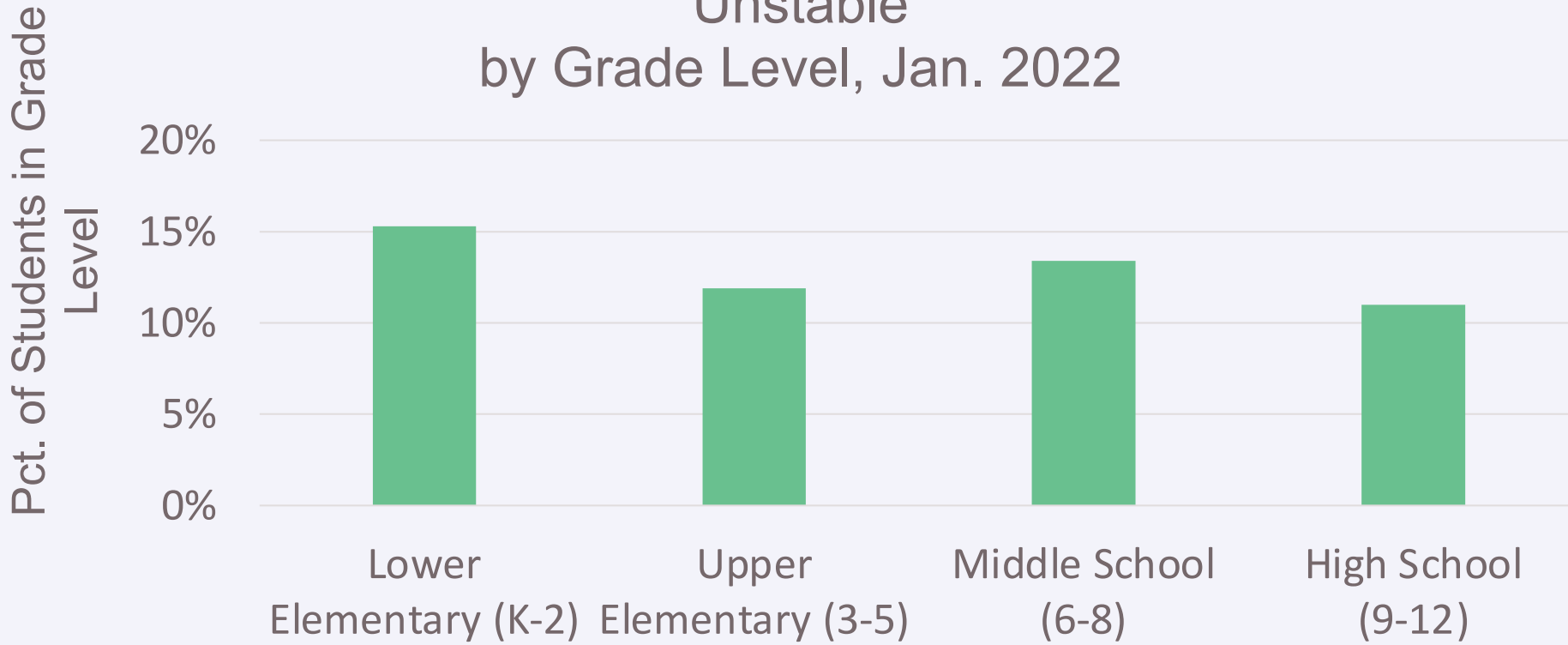
	Black	Hispanic	Other Race
Pct. Housing Unstable	14.2%	5.9%***	11.9%

***statistically significantly different than Black students, $p < 0.001$

“Other race” includes white or Middle Eastern/North African, Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, and multiracial students.

Housing instability is high for all grade levels in Detroit.

Percentage of Detroit Students who are Housing Unstable by Grade Level, Jan. 2022



DPSCD neighborhood schools enroll more housing unstable students.

	DPSCD Neighborhood	Charter	DPSCD Selective
Pct. Housing Unstable	16.2%	10.6%***	7.1%***

***statistically significantly different than DPSCD neighborhood school students, $p < 0.001$

Housing unstable families have lower incomes, less employment.

	Homeless	Other Housing Unstable	Stable Housing
Family Income	\$18,270.08 ^{***}	\$20,006.49 ^{***}	\$30,390.04
Any Employed	64.9% ^{***}	84.8%	83.0%
Any Full-Time	54.0% [*]	54.4%	63.9%

*statistically significantly different than stable housing students, $p < 0.05$

***statistically significantly different than stable housing students, $p < 0.001$

Many housing unstable families are not receiving social services to which they are entitled

Social Service	Pct. Housing Unstable...	
	Currently Receiving	Previously Received
WIC ⁺	32%	65%
SNAP	75%	20%
TANF	7%	21%
Medicaid	83%	10%
Section 8 Vouchers	8%	11%

+For parents of kindergarten students only.

Example of parent losing social service benefits while they were experiencing homelessness:

SNAP: “I had missed the review because I was trying to find somewhere to stay.”

Disability insurance: “I guess they been tried to contact me through the mail and I didn’t have an address. I’m appealing that right now...”

Housing unstable students less often enroll in nearest school than stably housed students

Housing Status	Attends Nearest School	Distance (mi) to Nearest School	Distance (mi) to School Attended
Homeless	14.2%	0.5	2.4
Other Housing Unstable	5.9%*	0.7	3.7*
Stable Housing	12.7%	0.6	2.9

*statistically significantly different than homeless students, $p < 0.05$.

Housing Instability and Transportation

Parents of housing unstable students are less likely to have a car.

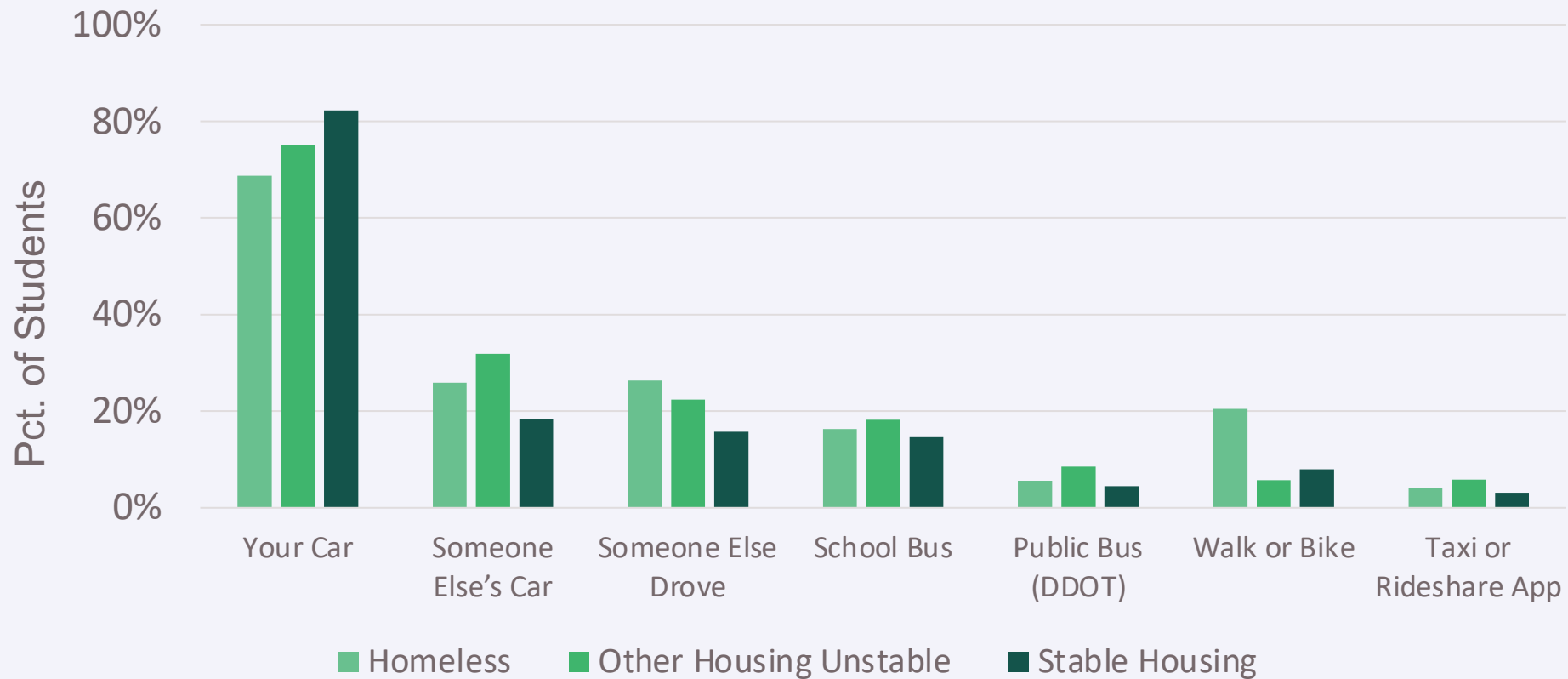
	Homeless	Other Housing Unstable	Stable Housing
Parent Has Car	45.9%***	55.1%**	71.0%

**statistically significantly different than stable housing students, $p < 0.01$

***statistically significantly different than stable housing students, $p < 0.001$

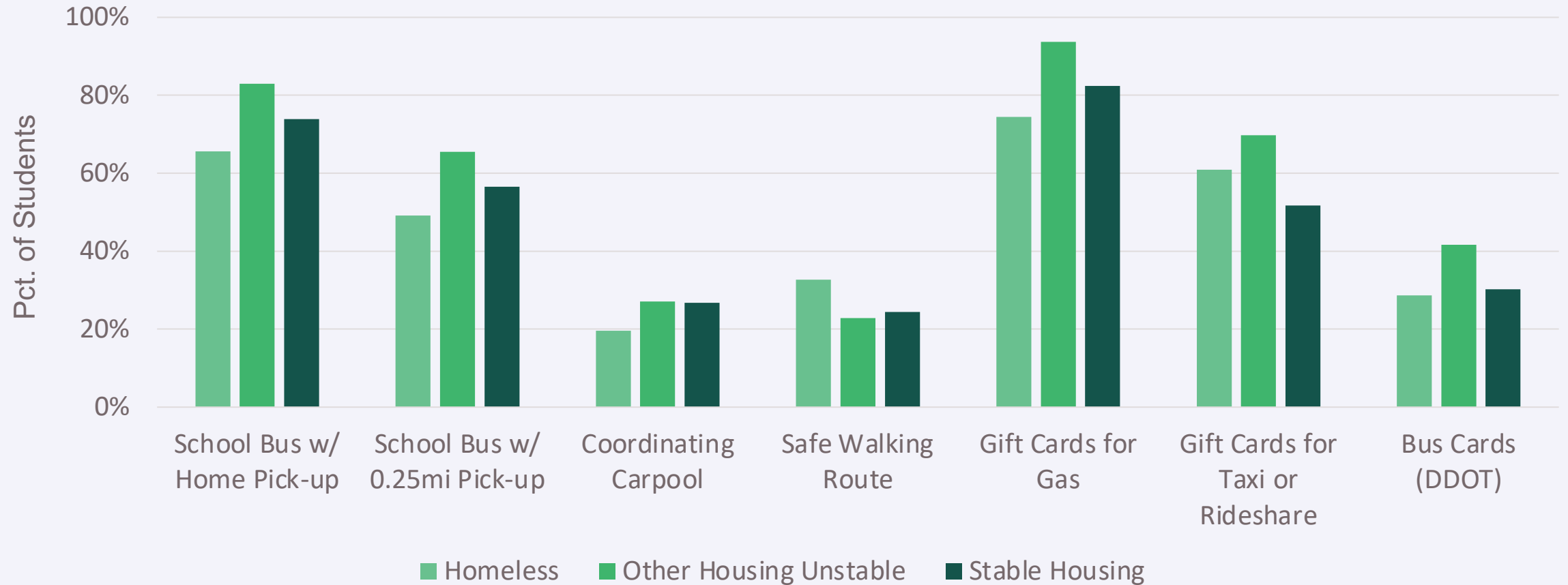
Housing unstable students more likely to rely on someone else for ride.

Frequent Transportation to School (AM) for Detroit Students by Housing Status, Jan. 2022



School buses and gas cards would be most helpful, but slightly less for homeless students.

Helpful Transportation for Detroit Students
by Housing Status, Jan. 2022



Thank you!