

**Conway Middle School:
Presentation on Homeless and Highly Mobile Families
Conway, North Carolina
Presentation By
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Abstract: A presentation by a rural school district on improving educational outcomes for low-income students. Results of parent surveys are summarized and the importance of parental involvement in schools is discussed. Special features include: strategies and resources to support homeless and highly mobile students.

Key Words: Academic Achievement; Attendance/Enrollment; Community (Awareness of Homelessness/High Mobility); Parent and Family Involvement; Middle School; Poverty; School District, Surveys, and Tracking Mobility

School and WBPB Information

School: **Conway Middle School**

Grade levels: **6-8**

School District: **Northampton**

City/Town: **Conway**

State: **North Carolina**

School enrollment size for 2006-07: **395**

Number of educators/teachers involved in 2006-07 WBPB projects/actions: **2**

Number of administrators involved in 2006-07 WBPB projects/actions: **1**

Number of parents/families involved in 2006-07 WBPB projects/actions: **1**

Mobility rate for 2005-06: **4%**

Mobility rate for 2006-07: **5%**

Percent of students eligible for free/reduce lunch: **75.4%**

Title I School: **yes**

Number of public agencies involved in 2006-07 WBPB projects/actions: **4**

Number of community members involved in 2006-07 WBPB projects/actions: **1**

Number of non-profits involved in 2006-07 WBPB projects/actions: **2**

Population size based on current census data: **21,247**

High school graduation rate: **62.1%**

Introduction

Conway Middle School is located in rural Northampton County in Conway, North Carolina in the eastern region of the state. The Town of Jackson is the county seat of Northampton. Farming has been the county's main source of income for many years.



Northampton County is a very small rural county and there are not many businesses. Therefore, it is understandable that we have low achieving students from families that live in poverty.

Northampton County’s breakdown by race according to the 2000 census is as follows:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 59.43% Black/African American • 39.09% White/Caucasian • 0.73% Hispanic or Latino • 0.63% from two or more races 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.39% from other races • 0.32% Native American • 0.09% Asian • 0.05% Pacific Islander
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The population of Northampton County is 22,086. There are 10 schools in our system with 3,120 enrolled students. Conway Middle School is one of those schools and is located on the east side of the county.

There are approximately five (5) homeless students in Conway Middle School who are served through the McKinney-Vento Act of 1987 and its 2001 reauthorization.

Northampton County Demographics

- **Northampton County School System is a rural district located in northeastern North Carolina.**
- **It is a low wealth county with a high percentage of families living in poverty.**
- **Of the 3,120 students in Northampton County, 75 were identified as homeless.**

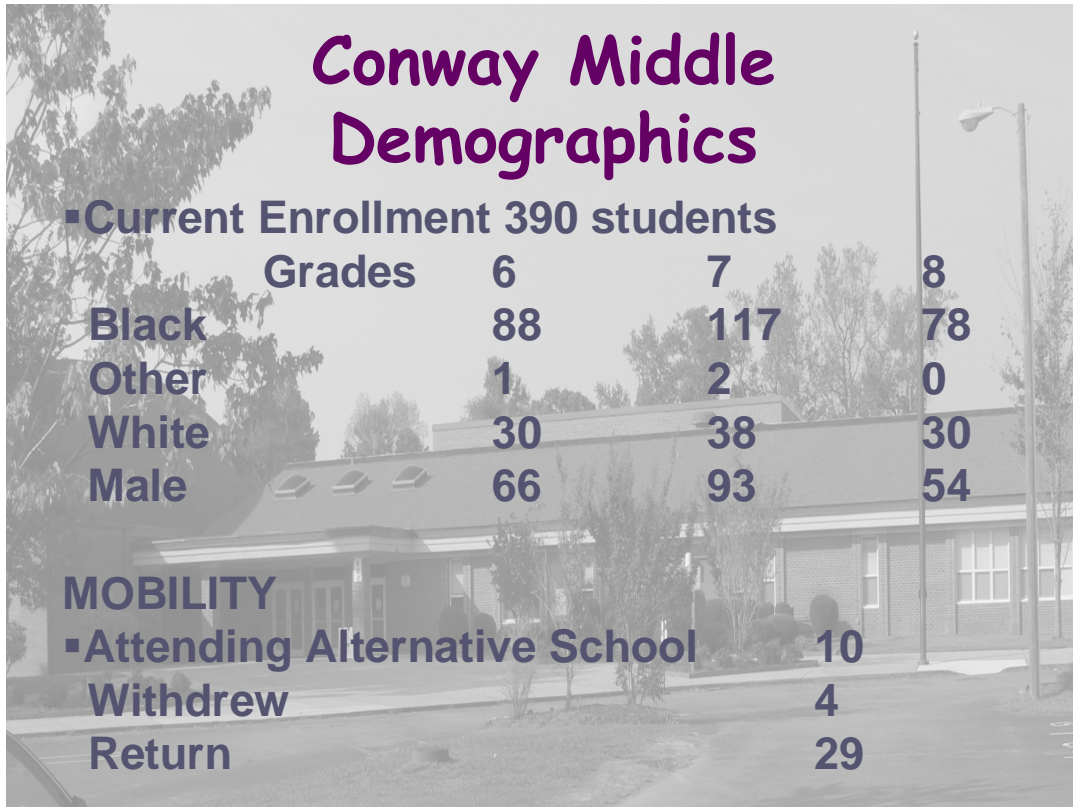
Northampton County Demographics Cont'd

- 84% of our children are on free or reduced lunch.
- A majority of our parents are at-risk meaning, they work for low wages and work two or more jobs to pay for clothing, transportation, etc.

Listed below is the demographic information from Conway Middle School:

- 390 Students enrolled
- 84% of Students Qualify for Free and/or Reduced Lunch
- 78% were on grade level in Reading
- 75% were on grade level in Reading
- 77% were on grade level in Reading
- 39.5% were on grade level in Math
- 41.2% were on grade level I Math

Conway Middle School is known as a “Priority School” in North Carolina. Priority School means that a school has 50-60% of their students at grade level or less or 50% of students at grade level.



Conway Middle Demographics

▪ **Current Enrollment 390 students**

Grades	6	7	8
Black	88	117	78
Other	1	2	0
White	30	38	30
Male	66	93	54

MOBILITY

▪ Attending Alternative School	10
Withdrew	4
Return	29

Structure of Our Project

The homeless and highly mobile students were identified before the start of school last year. To increase awareness of resources for these students, our team developed the following ideas after attending WBPD training in Colorado.

1. The after school programs showed progress in our students and the principal at Conway Middle School requested all students be remediated in math and reading.
2. The principal talked about the McKinney-Vento Act at each bi-monthly PTO meeting and the progress we were making.
3. Our county has the Northampton County Minister’s Council, which provided after school tutoring and counseling for all of our students.

What We’re Finding Out

Our parents completed a questionnaire developed by our team concerning homelessness. The responses to the questionnaire lead to these impressions:

- Families have a difficult time understanding why they were considered “homeless”, under the McKinney-Vento Act, when they were living in a house.

- Parents expect school system to raise their children and furnish school uniforms, shoes, supplies, etc.
- Parents who need to be seen by school personnel usually choose not to follow up with requests.

The McKinney Vento Act

The McKinney Vento Homelessness Assistance Act (Education for Homeless Children & Youth), reauthorized in January 2002, ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness.

Homelessness is a lack of permanent housing resulting from extreme poverty or from the lack of a safe and stable environment.

Significance of Our Findings

WBPD required lots of research, time and energy to start the long road to improving our children's academic progress and to have more involvement from parents. We need to get the point across to parents that these children need to have competent help at home as well as respect, love and understanding. Our children are eager to learn but when they return home there is no support for the students, therefore, they revert backwards. Most of our parents claim that their children are not homeless since they live with grandparents or other relatives.

We hope that the new school year will start with involving parents who are willing and trying to reach those who are not, to make sure the needs of our children are met from the very start. Getting Northampton County parents involved is a tough goal but we feel that this can eventually be achieved by hard work and dedication for the future of our children.

STRATEGIES

- ❖ Ensure that equitable and excellent services are provided throughout our school system to help our children and families overcome their at-risk factors and increase their resiliency.
- ❖ Ensure that homeless and highly mobile students have tools and resources they need to graduate from high school and pursue higher education

STRATEGIES

- ❖ Implement Community-N-Schools through donations within the county (Uniform Closet)
- ❖ Grade Levels/Teams Adopt-A-Family
- ❖ Use services provided by the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Choanoke Area Development Association (CADA)

Thoughts after Survey

We found that many of our parents want a good education for their children and have been very frustrated with their lack of ability to provide better for them. They have relied on after school programs to teach their children and therefore have not been there for them when they needed them.

Our parents are finding that a good home environment and involvement with their child's school is an important part of their child's academic and social development. They are finding that a child needs stability in their life and this means staying at one address for more than a year or so.

When a child sees their parents showing respect to others, they show the same to their teachers, peers, etc. This is just the old saying, "Children learn what they live".

It is so nice for our parents to visit their child's school without an invitation or a scheduled meeting. By doing so, it shows their child they care about them and what they are doing in school. We have found through this work that most parents want what is best for their child and want to give them every opportunity to fulfill their dreams of higher education.

Website Resources

- Text on McKinney Vento Legislation - <http://www.nlchp.org/faeducation/mckinneytext.cfm>
- National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty - <http://www.nlchp.org>
- National Network for Youth - <http://www.nn4youth.org>
- Students On the Move - <http://www.serve.org/nche/ibt/educmobile.php>