

Students

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lack of shelters are all contributing factors. Substance abuse or mental-health factors might play a role. Some are chronically homeless, Ladd said, whereas others are “just having a hard time.”

Some students “double up,” meaning they share the housing of others due to economic reasons. Many are transient.

Limited funding and cuts to state programs exacerbate the issue, Ladd said.

According to the superintendent’s office, the federal government allocates about

students who are homeless have equal opportunity to the same educational opportunities as other students, providing transportation if necessary to keep students at their school of origin and offering them the proper resources to actively stay in school.

Outside of the classroom, students who are homeless face difficult lives.

“Some kids don’t know what they’re going to eat, where they’re going to be,” Ladd said. “They have a very uncertain future even with this ability of trying to keep them stable.”

According to a 2008 report from the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth and First Focus, children and youth who are homeless are more likely to experience physical, mental and developmental health problems than other children. They are more likely to perform poorly in school, leading to reduced chances of graduation.

While educational measures like McKinney-Vento do help, Ladd said it’s not enough to overcome the issue.

“We can do our piece in school with the educational [part], but some of that support needs to come from things that happen after school,” Ladd said.

Namely, the lasting stigma against those who are homeless inhibits improvement.

“One thing that I think keeps the situation bad is that there’s a lot of discrimination against homeless people,” said David Delgado, a case manager at Peace for the Streets by Kids from the Streets in Seattle.

In King County, the Committee to End Homelessness is one group working to end

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\$950,000 annually to Washington state to fund resources and programs serving students who are homeless. Those funds are distributed to the various local education agencies through grants.

“We could use more,” Olson said, “but it is something.”

Of the K-12 students comprising the 2011-12 figure, middle- and high-school students are hardest hit, Ladd said.

“It’s becoming more common for families to be homeless as opposed to what people think of as homeless,” Ladd said. “It’s really families, people with children, [with a] mom and dad, middle-class people slowly finding themselves in that predicament.”

The McKinney-Vento Act mandates that

Scrap the MAP



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

On Feb. 6, Chief Seattle teachers joined educators in Seattle and across the nation to support a boycott of tests like the Measure of Academic Progress. Teachers at Garfield, Orca, The Center School also held Scrap the Map events. The Chicago Teachers Union passed a resolution pledging support for the Seattle teachers’ boycott of the “high-stakes” standardized test.

such stigmatization and bring awareness to the problem.

The committee maintains a “Youth and Young Adult Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness” as well as hosts advocacy events and conversations about homelessness.

“I think people are misguided,” Ladd said. She cited a misconception that homeless

people have to look a certain way, be a certain way, be a certain color.

“They can be educated, they can be going to school.”

Sheridan Smalley is a student in the University of Washington Department of Communication News Laboratory.

PTSD

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arise from an effort to protect patients.

“Madigan command has an obligation to ensure patient safety and the delivery of the highest quality care to all our beneficiaries. Anytime a concern is raised about patient safety or the quality of care, we have an obligation to act,” said Col. Dallas Homas, Madigan’s commander.

Hick’s suspension is the latest development in a turbulent 12-month period for Madigan behavioral-health staff members, who treat soldiers who return from war with PTSD and other mental-health problems. Last year, the Army launched investigations into how Madigan staff screen PTSD

patients under consideration for medical retirement. During that investigation, two doctors were temporarily barred from clinical duties.

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cal duties.

The diagnosis of PTSD has become a critical issue in the military in the aftermath of

a 2008 change in law that mandated soldiers unable to serve due to the disability be qualified for medical retirement with pension

and other benefits.

Madigan set up a team of forensic psychiatrists to screen patients under considera-

tion for such retirements and ferret out soldiers who might be malingering. The team reversed more than 300 PTSD diagnoses.

But the forensic screening team was suspended and then permanently curtailed last year. Many patients underwent re-evaluations that reinstated PTSD diagnoses.

Hicks is a retired Army colonel and a former psychiatry department chairman. He headed up an intensive outpatient treatment program for PTSD. The circumstances of the program’s 2010 closure were part of last year’s Army investigations.

Rally

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majority of Washington state lawmakers get high marks from the National Rifle Association, the nation’s dominant pro-gun lobby, according to Project Vote Smart, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research group.

Yet in the aftermath of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings in Connecticut in December, gun-rights advocates are having to play defense.

Several bills have been introduced this session to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and the mentally ill. In addition, Senate Democratic Leader Ed Murray wants to ban assault weapons, and Gov. Jay Inslee, also a Democrat, supports some gun-control measures.

Gun-control proponents have hopes for House Bill 1588, which would require universal background checks for all firearms sales in the state. Currently, such checks are required only when buying a gun from a

federally licensed dealer. Gun-show transactions and private sales are exempt.

The bill’s sponsor, Rep. Jamie Pedersen, D-Seattle, calls it the “lowest-hanging fruit” when it comes to gun control.

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Ralph Fascitelli, president of Washington CeaseFire, thinks the measure has a good chance of making it at least through the House, which is controlled by Democrats.

“The problem is in the Senate now,” he

said, noting it’s controlled by a Republican-led majority. Many of the members have strong NRA ties.

NRA rankings, however, suggest the House will be no pushover, either.

And there’s legislation coming from the other side, as well, including the Washington state Firearms Freedom Act, introduced by Taylor.

The bill says, in part, that any federal law,

rule or order that is passed after Jan. 1, 2013, related to banning, registering semi-automatic firearms or magazines is unenforceable in Washington, he said.

Lawmakers have passed laws banning guns at courthouses, schools and bars, but they’ve never restricted the right to bear arms in the state Capitol.

When gun-rights supporters rallied in Olympia on Friday, a woman’s protest sign was confiscated when she tried to enter the statehouse, while a man carrying a rifle walked in with no problem. State officials said signs aren’t allowed because they take up too much room.

At least one lawmaker in the past apparently thought carrying a gun helped him get a bill passed.

In 1982, then-Sen. Kent Pullen debated

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