

Initial Focus Areas

EDUCATION What We Learned

Over 7,000
residents living
in the HEZ
under the
age of 18.

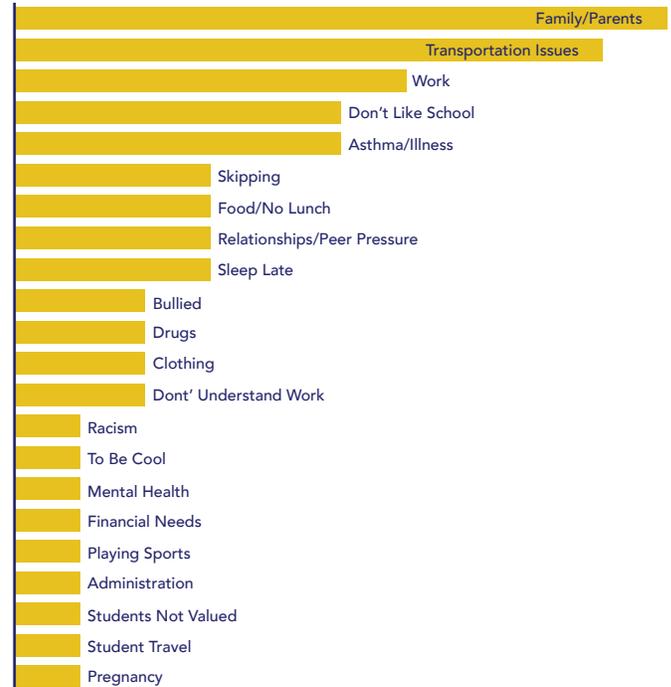
There are over 7,000 residents living in the HEZ under the age of 18. The length and quality of education, perhaps more than any other social determinant of health, impacts our well-being. Education predicts employment and income, which influences where someone can live and if they can afford quality housing and health care.

- Providence students fare poorly when compared to the statewide baseline on RICAS tests. Third graders score at about 50% of the statewide average and 8th graders score at less than 33% of the statewide average. With a 75% high school graduation rate, Providence Public Schools fall significantly below the statewide rate of 84%.
- Thirty-two percent of schools in Providence have been identified for intervention, versus 8% statewide, and college enrollment figures indicate that Providence students enrolling in college after high school (49%) are fewer than those statewide (61%).

FRUSTRATION with Public Schools and Chronic Absenteeism

- During the HEZ survey, most respondents were either **dissatisfied or neutral about public schools** and employment training opportunities in the neighborhood. Very few respondents showed satisfaction with public schools (15.3%, N=11).
- Within the HEZ, **52% of students at Alvarez High School are chronically absent.**
- The four elementary schools in the HEZ have rates of **chronic absenteeism ranging from 22% at Lillian Feinstein Elementary School to 33% at Charles N. Fortes School.**
- During community SpeakOuts, staff and volunteers from Young Voices asked school aged participants what factors contribute to absenteeism. **The most common responses were family/parent related issues, transportation related challenges, needing to work to support themselves and/or their family, and illness/asthma.**

SUGGESTED CAUSES OF STUDENT ABSENTEEISM



Post-Secondary ACCESS

- Less than half (N =34, 47.9%) of respondents to the community wide HEZ survey indicated that they or someone in their family had access to resources that would help them attain post-secondary credentials.
- WEHDC recently commissioned researchers at URI to examine educational outcomes among 11,834 Rhode Island mothers between the ages of 15-25 who gave birth between 2010 and 2015. The study revealed that, while 60% enrolled in higher education, only 19% persisted more than one semester, only 11.2% persisted more than one year, and only 6 % ever graduated from a post-secondary institution.

COVID-19 Learning Loss

- School closures will likely result in students falling behind, potentially widening the achievement gap between Providence and the rest of the state.
- In a survey completed this past May of young parents between the ages of 15-25, 33% of respondents indicated that they did not have a reliable device at home to use for distance learning and 13% indicated that they did not have a reliable internet connection.