# Project Connect Program

## Cincinnati Public School District

### Initiative Type(s):**
- Services for homeless youth; Community liaisons; Family engagement and support services; Student services provided prior to or after school

### Community Partner(s):**
- Nonprofit organization with experience serving children

### Description of Initiative:**
Project Connect is a program serving Cincinnati Public School District students experiencing homelessness. The district used Student Wellness and Success Fund money to provide increased academic, social and emotional supports to students in this program. The district hired a transportation liaison to reduce transportation issues and eliminate delays, a shelter liaison to serve all family shelters and an academic coach to serve students at two high schools with historically high numbers of homeless students.

### Initiative Benefits:**
The program has kept students connected to school, especially during remote and hybrid learning. Students built relationships with the academic coach and were able to stay connected to resources and the school in ways that were not available to them previously. This additional layer allowed for more accountability with attendance and enabled the academic coach to work with students to resolve attendance and academic issues. By providing additional student supports, including mental health and basic need supports, Cincinnati Public School District was better able to serve the whole child needs of their students. The academic coach provided the following supports: provided proactive outreach and academic coaching for homeless and unaccompanied youth; planned intentional academic pathways for homeless and unaccompanied youth; worked to proactively identify students who could benefit from these services; monitored student progress and worked with faculty and staff to remove academic barriers; coordinated with other programs to link social and emotional health with academic success; worked to connect academics and skill development to the exploration of 3E pathways; and collaborated with community partners to streamline referrals to services.

### Essential Staff and Partners:**
To make this initiative successful, Cincinnati Public School District worked with a community nonprofit, Activities Beyond the Classroom, to fill the academic coach position. Activities Beyond the Classroom works to remove barriers for students, increase access to extracurricular supports and reduce achievement gaps.

### Action Steps to Get Started:**
Cincinnati Public School District identified schools with performance and attendance gaps between homeless and non-homeless students. Then, the district researched the impact of increased supports, liaised with community partners and initiated the hiring process.

### For More Information:**
Rebeka Beach
beachre@cps-k12.org

---

**NOTE:** Student Wellness and Success Funds were used for this initiative.