



Sparking X

**Ben Ruch – Homeless Liaison
H.E.A.R.T.H. Project
Polk County Public Schools**



What is the H.E.A.R.T.H. Project?

- McKinney-Vento Act: 1987 Federal Civil Rights law that provides rights & services to youth experiencing homelessness within the United States public school system
- Designated school district Homeless Liaison
- Definition of homelessness: “individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.”
- What does this look like? (Doubled-up, Motel/Hotel, Shelter, Car, Substandard, Unaccompanied Youth)

How does H.E.A.R.T.H. help?

- Removing Barriers (Immediate Enrollment & Full Participation)
- School Stability (School of Origin/Transportation)
- School Readiness (Supplies)
- Supplemental Education (Tutorial Services)
- Health Services (Medical, Dental, & Vision)
- Basic Needs (Hygiene, Food, Clothing)
- Unique Needs (Birth Certificates, Household Items, Fees)
- Community Referrals (Housing, Utilities, Mental Health)



Measuring Success & Outcomes

Identification, Attendance, &
Promotion

Success “Bell” Stories



Jenn’s Story

Education



Mandy’s Story

Is



Elizabeth’s Story

Key

Next Steps

- Who is the designated Homeless Liaison in your school district?
- How many students experiencing homelessness have been identified in your school district?
- What needs do the students experiencing homelessness in your community have?

Take Action



2025
 **ENGAGE**™

Sparking *Transformation*