Curriculum Framework for Homelessness Education
by Noah Rattler

This educational block is designed to facilitate middle- and high-school students’ understanding of the different aspects of homelessness. Serving as an interdisciplinary curriculum framework for English, Social Studies, Political Science / Government, Health and Art, the scope of information varies in its complexity, and teachers can choose the age-appropriate topics for their classrooms.

I. English | Vocabulary – essential terms that will provide a foundational understanding current factors that contribute homelessness in the U.S.
- Homelessness
- Poverty
- Civics
- Philanthropy
- Charity
- Equity
- Advocacy
- Activism
- Class
- Classism
- Medicare
- Medicaid
- Welfare
- Service
- Demographic
- Region
- Ethnicity
- Race
- Income
- Municipality
- Government
- Community

II. Political Science & Social Studies | Concepts - a list of concepts that build on the vocabulary, while deepening the student’s understanding of 21st-century conversations about homelessness
- N.I.M.B.Y. (Not In My Backyard)
- Social Justice
- Mckinney-Vento Act
- Servant Leadership
- Social Safety Net
- Social Services
- Public Health
- Living Wage
- Working Poor
III. **Political Science & Social Studies | Discussions & Papers** - a list of activities designed to encourage students to apply their knowledge of homelessness

**Ramifications of Homelessness** - students investigate homelessness from several perspectives, including demographics, the contributing factors, current approaches to eliminating homelessness, governmental policies that affect the homeless in our society, and the Social/Political movements that have developed around homelessness.

**Philanthropy, Charity and Community Service** - students discuss the positive and negative ramifications of giving in the effort to relieve homelessness.

**Advocacy vs. Activism** - students compare and contrast the two concepts as methods of raising awareness and galvanizing support for the homeless.

**Personal Experiences with Homelessness** – students write about/share their own observations and/or experiences with homelessness.

**In Their Own Voices** - through research or interviews, students present the personal stories of those who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness.

**The End of Homelessness** - after studying the realities surrounding homelessness and looking at current solutions, students develop their own solutions to homelessness, discuss their implementation, and speculate how society changes after these actions have taken place.

**Theological Perspectives** - students investigate and discuss the stances of different religions on homelessness in both historical and modern contexts.
IV. **Health** - these topics should be investigated in order to give the student an idea of the possible long-term effects of homelessness, and some of the major contributing health factors
- Malnutrition
- Exposure
- Food Poisoning
- Communicable Diseases
- Long-Term Sleep Loss
- Schizophrenia
- Bipolar Disorder
- Depression
- Chemical Dependency

V. **Art Projects** - helps students integrate the things they learn by using their creativity to reinterpret homelessness through any art medium they choose

- **Viral Video Campaign** - students create an online video campaign that helps bring attention to an aspect of the homeless phenomena of their choice
- **This Could Be You** - students come up with creative ways to show how close many people are to being homeless
- **Faces of Homelessness** - telling the personal stories of the homeless population in a matter that helps others see the diversity that exists in this sector of the greater community
- **Talent/Art Shows** - gives the students opportunities to showcase their creations to the greater community. Art shows can also act as anchor points for any service projects that the students choose to undertake.

VI. **Political Action** - in the event that the students want to take action, these are a couple simple activities they can undertake. The activities are aimed at community leaders and the municipal, state and national politicians that represent both the schools and neighborhoods of the students

- **Phone Call Blitz** - at a coordinated date and time, the students call the leaders and politicians and encourage them to focus on homelessness. This can be done from a script, or through free discussion
- **Letter Writing Campaigns** - students write a persuasive paper to send to their officials with the intent of persuading said officials to act in the student's desires

VII. **Service Projects** - things that the students can do to support the local homeless population

- **Drives** - Food, Clothing, Books, Toys and Funds to support the local homeless population and/or local homeless service providers
Policy Discussions - students come up with solutions and share them with others (politicians, schools, parents, communities, etc)

Advocacy and Activism Campaigns - students design custom campaigns for the long-term use and application of their classes, schools and communities