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Foreclosures taking toll on more city school kids

Study says nearly 20,000 students lived in homes facing foreclosure in the 2006/2007 school year; often-ignored victims.

By [Amanda Fung](#)

Published: October 4, 2010 - 1:35 pm

A report released Monday morning highlights the increasingly negative impact—which has long been overlooked—that foreclosures are having on New York City school children.

In the 2006-2007 academic year, there were 18,525 school children from grades K-12 in homes facing foreclosure, up 59% from the 2003-2004 academic year, according to the report, which is titled [Kids and Foreclosures: New York City](#), by New York University's Institute for Education and Social Policy and NYU's Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy. Not surprisingly, affected students are concentrated in schools located in [two of the neighborhoods hardest hit by the foreclosure crisis](#)—southeast Queens and northern Brooklyn.

“Few researchers have explored the human costs of foreclosure, and virtually no one has considered the collateral costs on children,” said Ingrid Gould Ellen, faculty co-director of the Furman Center and a professor at NYU's Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, in a statement.

More than half (57%) of the public school students living in properties that have entered foreclosure are black, the report noted. That figure is striking because black children made up just 33% of the public school population in 2006-2007.

While the foreclosure crisis in New York has not been as dramatic as elsewhere in the country, it is still a significant problem, especially in certain areas of the city. It is also a far bigger problem today than it was in the 2006-2007 school year covered by the report.

Roughly 100 schools in the city, primarily in Brooklyn and Queens, had 5% or more of their student body experiencing a foreclosure, in 2006-2007. In one Brooklyn school, 14% of its

students lived in buildings that entered the foreclosure process. In the schools with a high concentration of children living in a home heading into foreclosure, both reading and math test scores were significantly lower than in other schools. The study did not identify specific schools but noted that they are mostly located in northern Brooklyn and southeast Queens.

“Our study reveals that the impact has been uneven across schools and neighborhoods,” said Amy Ellen Schwartz, director of the Institute for Education and Social Policy and professor at NYU's Steinhardt and Wagner schools, in a statement. “Further study is needed to determine whether and to what extent a foreclosure action impacts a student's performance in school.”

This report is the first of a two-part analysis on how foreclosures affect children in the city. The second part of the analysis will take a look at the 2008-2009 academic year and explore whether foreclosures force students to move to lower-performing schools. That portion of the report is expected to be released in a few months.

The study was funded by Open Society Institute, which backed similar studies in Baltimore and Washington, D.C.

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