



## Case For Action

School Connect COS creates opportunities for local churches, businesses, and other organizations to support local schools in addressing some of the deepest felt needs of our city, such as family homelessness and at-risk-youth.

With over 50 local church partners and a growing number of businesses involved, School Connect COS is actively building a model to surround schools with “Community Teams” - groups of businesses, non-profits, and partners committed to helping schools, families, and neighborhoods thrive. But schools face pressing challenges all around our community:

### Food Insecurity:

- 11.8% of families in El Paso County are food insecure, in-line with national average, in 2017 (11.8%) - ([www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org))
- In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, unemployment and food insecurity soared. In 2021, 53 million people turned to food banks and community programs for help putting food on the table. ([www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org))
- EPC has half the national average of grocery stores rates, and 1/3 less than the rate in CO ([www.arcgis.com](http://www.arcgis.com))
- Nearly 50% of El Paso county is considered a “food desert” ([www.arcgis.com](http://www.arcgis.com))

### General COS stats:

- 14.2% of EPC residents live below the **poverty** line (national average 14%). (U.S. Census Bureau)
- 1 in 4 children (26.1%) in COS live in single-parent households
  - Median income for married couple households is \$87,000 annually; father-only families is just over half (54.1%, or \$47,000) of that amount; mother-only families make an average of 34.2% (\$29,800) of that amount.
  - Single-parent families living in EPC are 3 times more likely to rely on public or government assistance (13.1% vs. 42%)
- Homeless students and families in COS face significant challenges to their physical, emotional, and mental health, as well as their ability to stay in school.
  - 17 EPC school districts collectively identified 1,117 students from 449 families experiencing homelessness in the 2017-18 school year (CS Independent).
  - Local experts estimate as many as an additional 50% of that number of children are estimated to be below school age, bringing the total homeless children population to nearly 1,800.
  - Only 231 children self-identified as experiencing homelessness in the 2018 Point-in-Time survey (less than 13% of the total counted by schools).

These students arrive at school campuses with additional needs for meals, medical and mental healthcare, and social and emotional support that most schools are ill-equipped to provide.

### District 11:

- Median household income = \$52,000/year (80% of EPC overall)
- Over 13% (including 17% of children) live in poverty
- Represents 40% of the total number of COS households
  - All above from [censusreporter.org](http://censusreporter.org)

### District 2:

- 53% of the population is under 30 years old
- Median HH income of \$43k/year (60% of EPC overall)
- Nearly 25% (including 42% of children) live in poverty
- Median Home values are 2/3 that of the rest of EPC
- Less than 18% have bachelor’s degree or higher
  - All above from [censusreporter.org](http://censusreporter.org)