

Low Performing Schools in Urban High Poverty Communities

In Brief

Lower school performance has historically been strongly associated with high poverty.

However, high poverty schools can perform relatively better with sound instructional practices, effective staff, and support services.

The state can facilitate improvement through additional resources and flexibility for low performing schools.

In This Presentation

Background

Performance of Urban High Poverty Schools

Improving Virginia's Low Performing Schools

Student Achievement Influenced by Community, Family, and Schools



Community

- Local economy
- Employment
- Education
- Crime and violence



Family

- Household income
- Physical, social, & emotional support
- Stability of family & living situation
- Cognitive stimulation in the home



Public Schools

- School Board & division
- Funding
- Teachers & principals
- Curriculum & instruction
- School climate
- Remedial & enrichment opportunities



Student Achievement

Poverty Poses Significant Challenges for Virginia's Urban Students

- Students in high poverty schools more likely to
 - miss school days
 - change schools during the school year
- Poverty cited as significant challenge by teachers and principals
 - Students regularly come to school unprepared for learning because of difficulties at home

In This Presentation

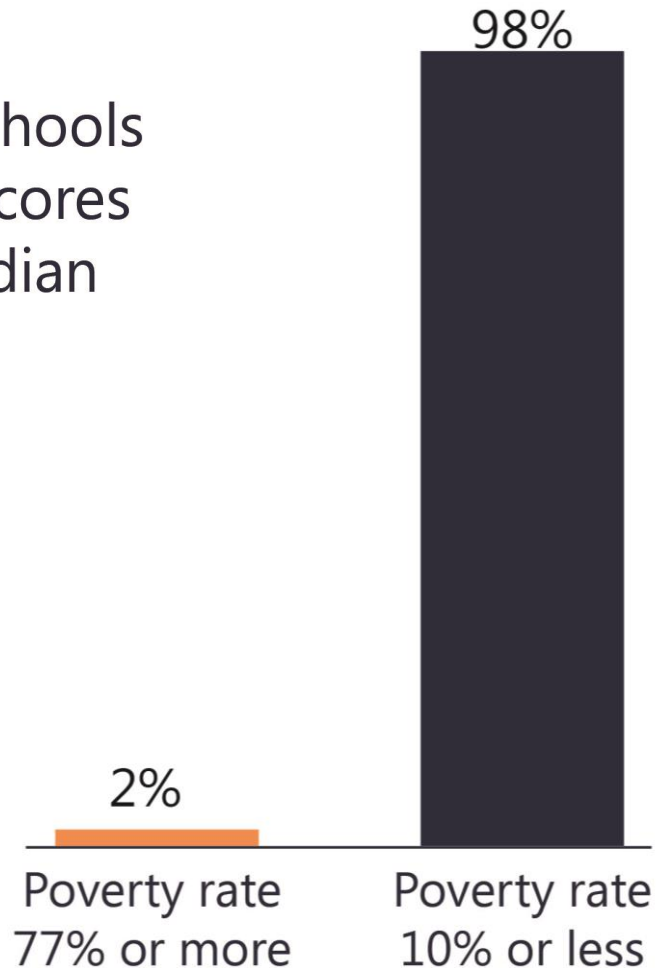
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High Poverty Schools Had Lower English SOL Test Scores (2013)

% of elementary schools with English SOL scores **ABOVE** state median



Low Performing Schools Often Lacked a Sufficient Number of Effective Teachers

- 7 of 11 low performing schools reported lacking enough effective teachers
- Two challenges with removing ineffective teachers
 - Difficulty recruiting quality teachers
 - Time and documentation required for termination

Staff at Higher Performing Schools Used Recommended Instructional Practices

- Effective teachers
 - Regular use of student performance data
 - Team approach to teaching
 - Ongoing professional development
- Principal serves as instructional leader
- Limited turnover among teachers and principals

Higher Performing Schools Provided Support Services to Students

- Achievable Dream schools
 - Partnered with local businesses and City of Newport News
- Broad range of support services
 - Character education
 - Mentoring and monitoring
 - Medical and personal care services

Past Improvement Efforts Have Had Moderately Positive Impact

- Low performing schools have been subject to state assistance and requirements
- About 40% of schools improved relative to the state average
- Nearly half of schools were still substantially below the state average score

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Research Finds that Good Teachers Change Lives

- The quality of teaching is the most important factor within schools
- Increasing the achievement of low-performing students is cost effective
 - Replacing the bottom 5 percent of teachers with an average teacher would increase students' lifetime earnings by \$250,000 per classroom
 - Increase college attendance, other benefits to society

Research Shows Benefits of Increasing Achievement of Low-performing Students

- Low-performing students have more room to grow
 - Larger impact on student achievement
- Student-specific and school-wide approaches
- Improve the quality of teaching for low-performing students
 - Financial incentives to teach low-performing students

Research Supports Identifying, Improving, and Retaining Effective Teachers

- Identifying quality teachers
 - Principals' assessments
 - Test scores
 - Student surveys
- One-on-one assessment and coaching, more intensive for the newest teachers
- Financial incentives can reduce teacher turnover

Teachers Can Be Trained Specifically for Urban High Poverty Schools

- Teach for America provides short-term solution
 - Cost local school division up to \$5,000 per teacher placed
- Urban teacher residency programs provide longer-term solution
 - Richmond and VCU
 - Approximately \$480K in planning costs and \$40K per teacher placed

Recommendations

- ✓ Provide grants to local school divisions that place Teach for America teachers in low performing schools.
- ✓ Provide grants to higher education institutions and local school divisions to develop teacher residency programs.

Non-Traditional Models Can Improve Instruction and Student Support

- Year-round schools
- Support services for students in poverty
 - Achievable Dream model: fewer students, per-student expenditures \approx 20% higher
- High quality charter schools
 - Can improve high poverty schools, according to research literature
 - Requires rigorous evaluation of charter vendors
- Stronger MOUs between state and low performing divisions

Questions?

- Final reports posted on JLARC website
 - <http://jlarc.virginia.gov/>