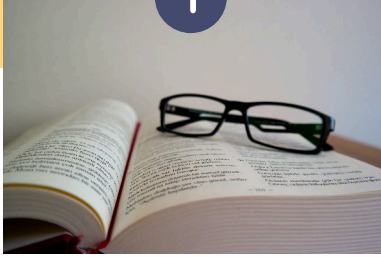# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POVERTY AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Fan Pan, Tammiee S. Dickenson, Kara Bown, Xumei Fan, Gina M. Kunz, & Thomas E. Hodges

Poverty shapes the experience of more than twelve million children in the United States. To further an understanding of the relationship between poverty and school performance in South Carolina public schools, we investigated the association of high and low poverty levels with a range of state report card variables for three school levels: elementary, middle, and high schools.

Variables

1

Academic achievement/outcomes

For academic achievement, elementary type analysis and middle school type analysis include SC Ready assessments in English language arts and mathematics, whereas high school type analysis includes End-of-Course (EOC) assessments in English languages arts and mathematics.

2

Student engagement

This category includes chronic absenteeism rate of students and teacher results from three items on a school climate survey.

3

Classroom environment

This category includes a variety of variables connected with teacher quality and consistency.
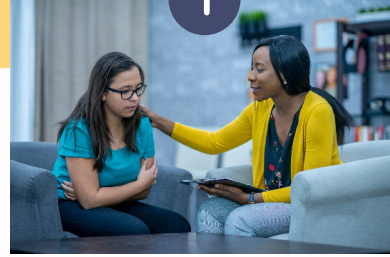
4

Student safety

Variables in this category include perceptions of school safety from surveys of parents and teachers as well as student suspension data.

Recommendations

1

Availability

Expand the availability and number of school care staff particularly counsellors, psychologists, and nurses.

2

Access

Open access to higher-level (e.g., AP, IB) courses should be prioritized especially at the middle and high school levels to provide opportunities to learn with the most experienced teachers and to be academically challenged.

3

Adaptability

Adapt and transform the school climate into one where students feel safe, accepted, and supported as an intervention to improve academic outcomes and home-school relationships.

4

Acceptability

Invite the community to dialogue about possible changes can generate a grassroots' investment and insight into ways to make schools acceptable and prioritized in communities.