

ESSENTIAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR AT-RISK  
STUDENTS IN NEW YORK'S HIGH POVERTY DISTRICTS

Maisto et al. v. State of New York

Prepared by Laurence T. Spring,

Superintendent of Schenectady CSD

November 12, 2014

## A. Introduction

New York's Small Cities districts are similar to New York City in their high levels of students who are poor and living in concentrated poverty. Also like New York City, these students require an expanded platform of essential programs and services, to augment the regular curriculum and instructional program made available to all students, in order to receive the opportunity of a sound basic education, i.e., the meaningful high school education required under the New York State constitution. This expanded platform must include educational and educationally-related programs and services that respond to the unique needs of students who are at risk of academic failure as a result of concentrated poverty in their schools and communities.

To prepare this report, I have thoroughly reviewed all of the decisions in the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) case, which held that all children are entitled under the state constitution to the opportunity of a sound and basic education, that all children can learn and children who come to school with greater educational and socio-economic disadvantages must be provided with the additional resources needed to provide that opportunity. In particular, I reviewed *Campaign for Fiscal Equity v. State*, 86 N.Y.2d 307 (1995) (CFE I), which established the basic standards and requirements for a sound basic education; the decision of Judge Leland DeGrasse applying those standards to the evidence presented in the trial concerning the deficiencies in resources for New York City students, 187 Misc. 2d, 1 (2001); and *Campaign for Fiscal Equity v. State*, 100 N.Y.2d 893 (2003), the Court of Appeals ruling upholding and affirming Judge DeGrasse's findings and conclusions of the failure of the State to provide the essential resources and adequate funding necessary to provide New York City students with the opportunity for a sound basic education.

This report focuses on the specific portion of the Court of Appeals' CFE rulings that requires an "expanded platform" of programs and services for at-risk students be provided as an

element of the template of essential resources necessary to provide all students with a meaningful opportunity for a sound basic education. The “template” of essential resources identified in CFE includes: a) sufficient numbers of qualified teachers, principals and other personnel; b) appropriate class sizes; c) adequate and accessible school buildings, with sufficient space for appropriate class size and sound curriculum; d) sufficient, up-to-date books, supplies, libraries, technology and laboratories; and e) suitable curriculum, including an expanded platform of programs for at-risk students; (f) adequate resources for students with extraordinary needs; and (g) a safe orderly environment.

In this report, I will examine the specific educational and educationally-related programs and services that are effective in meeting the needs of at-risk students in the high needs districts, including the Small Cities districts in this case. I will present my conclusions as to the specific programs and services that must be included in the “expanded platform” of programs and services, as required by the CFE rulings, in order to deliver a suitable curriculum to at-risk children in high poverty districts with similar student demographics as the Small Cities’ districts in this case. While there are many conditions that put students at risk, this report is focused on household poverty, community poverty and intense poverty. My analysis is conducted in light of the minimum State-established standards for proficient student outcomes that are now in force and effect.

As I will explain in this report:

- 1) At-risk students in high-poverty schools and communities need a robust platform of programs and services in addition to the regular curriculum and instructional program provided to all students in order to achieve minimum State performance standards.
- 2) The level and intensity of these services must be calibrated be responsive to the extent of the needs of students generated by concentrated school and community poverty. The

intensity of the need for these additional resources increases when any of three variables associated with poverty increases: the intensity of poverty students' experience, the length of time students are in poverty, the percentage of students in specific schools and overall in the district whose families are poor; and the severity of poverty in the neighborhoods and community served by the schools and district.

These variables impact students in ways that are complex and multifaceted, As I will illustrate in my report, children in concentrated poverty are more likely to experience mental health, physical health, and social and behavioral problems that negatively affect their readiness to learn while in school that require both support services and extended learning opportunities after school and during the summer. Children of poverty are far more likely to be exposed to violence, be a victim of violence and neglect, and live with neighborhood disorganization. They are more likely to have a parent incarcerated, or otherwise under the control of the criminal justice system, or have a parent with a persistent or significant mental illness, addictions or other health problems. These children are more likely to experience their own physical and mental illnesses or develop coping mechanisms including substance abuse, violence or anti-social behaviors.

By the time many children enter elementary school, and as they progress through middle school, they are already experiencing the physical, social and mental health impacts of growing up in poverty; have developed self-coping behavioral and other mechanisms that impede their educational progress; and have fallen deeply behind their peers and grade-level expectations and outcomes. Many are not prepared for the intense environment of high school which, in turn, heightens feelings of frustration, failure and powerlessness in students, prompting students to fall further behind and/or drop out of school altogether.

These myriad impacts of family poverty and concentrated community poverty put students at-risk of poor performance, academic failure, grade retention and, inevitably, dropping out or not finishing secondary school meeting basic State high school graduation requirements. Schools and districts serving high poverty communities face the added challenge of addressing the concomitant effects of poverty which include food insecurity, anxiety, depression, adverse childhood experiences (ACE), environmental violence, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

To address these conditions and give students meaningful access to education, requires timely and prompt intervention with an effective platform of expanded programs and services. These programs and services must address the both the direct academic needs of children and the physical and mental conditions and illnesses that prevent them from taking advantage of the curriculum and instruction made available to all students. Further, these educational and educationally related programs and services must be provided with increasing intensity in response to the depth, length, or frequency of household and community poverty. In short, high poverty districts must be able to provide an expanded platform of services for at-risk students that encompasses not only instructional services to remediate students' deficits in educational progress and attainment, but also targeted interventions to address the physical, social and mental health needs of students and their families so that when at-risk students are in school, the school is taking steps to ensure they are ready to learn, throughout the school year and during the summer months, if necessary

## B. Background

My name is Laurence T. Spring, and I have been asked to provide this report because of my education and experience in educating students who live in poverty and attend high poverty schools and districts. I have been a superintendent for more than eight years; all of them have been in high need and impoverished communities in New York. Currently, I am the

Superintendent of Schools at the Schenectady City School District. I have had experiences as an assistant superintendent of instruction, a special education director, high school principal, assistant principal, and social studies teacher, all of which inform my expertise regarding what students need in order to be successful in school.

The Schenectady City School District is not dissimilar from most small urban centers around New York State. Schenectady has approximately 10,000 students with 80% of them qualifying for free or reduced lunch. The rate is high enough that the Community Eligibility Option, free meals for all children, is the norm. It is simply more cost effective.

Schenectady City has the 13<sup>th</sup> highest concentration of childhood poverty in the country, and there are several small cities in New York that have a higher concentration of poverty than Schenectady – we are not exceptional in this matter (Stanforth, 2012).

Unfortunately, when looking at numbers such as these, the real problems can easily get lost in the scale. To help bring focus, I will examine the impact of concentrated school and community poverty on students and teachers at the classroom level, using one particular elementary classroom in a typical elementary school in Schenectady, specifically, a third grade classroom in a Lincoln Elementary, a school serving an impoverished neighborhood in the city.

Here are the characteristics in Lincoln's third grade class:

- There are 26 children, all of them qualify for free lunch, which means their household income is below 130% of the federal poverty level for Schenectady, or less than \$30,615 for a family of four annually.
- Ten, or 38%, have at least one parent in jail or prison.
- Six, or 23%, of these children have both parents incarcerated.
- Eight, or 31%, have a parent with a significant or persistent mental illness.
- Eleven, or 42%, have some involvement with Child Protective Services.

- Just four of these students, or 15%, are proficient in the New York State Standards in English Language Arts.

These children – and the teachers and school staff – face significant challenges to ensure these children progress educationally, challenges not found in lower poverty schools and communities. These challenges intensify as the as the number of poor children in schools and classrooms increases.

### C. Effects of Poverty on Students and Communities

The complexity of how poverty interacts with children and the context of school is daunting. First, we have to consider that all poverty is not equal. It makes a difference if the poverty is familial or neighborhood based. Students in families with resources residing in high poverty neighborhoods are impacted differently than students in families with no resources, such as discretionary income, transportation, and health insurance, in those poor neighborhoods (Brooks-Gunn, 1997) (Wodtke, 2012). Second, the amount of time spent in poverty makes a difference as well (Brooks-Gunn, 1997) (Kennedy, 1986). A family that has a brief rough patch and cannot make rent for one month has a different level of stress compared to families that are habitually evicted due to lack of rent payment, or where the children are the third or fourth generation of poverty. The Coleman Report, from 1966, is widely regarded as the hallmark study illustrating the deleterious effects of poverty on educational opportunity. In general, these studies all reinforce the notion that the longer a child is in poverty the more harmful the effects. They also illustrate that as the percentage of students in a school who are living in poverty increases, the performance of all students in that school suffers (Kennedy, 1986).

The research is clear in establishing the link between poverty and poor academic performance. Many studies link the variables of family poverty and neighborhood poverty with suppressed academic performance and IQ scores (Coleman, 1966) (Gamoran, 2006) (Nikulina, 2011) (Lacour, 2011) (Dixon-Roman, 2013 ). Most high needs urban districts have high rates of

students performing in the lowest ranges for the state. In fact, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) can predict this phenomenon. In planning for student achievement and needs, NYSED has generated predictive patterns that show a systematic decline in student performance on state assessments as the school incidence of poverty increases. The actual results bear out a strikingly similar pattern (Fig. 1) as depicted in the analysis published by the New York State Education Department in Appendix C of their 2005 Overview of New York State Report Cards for Schools and Districts (2004-2005).

The data illustrated in the following graph demonstrates the strong correlation between the economic status of a student's household and academic achievement. It shows that the poorer the household, the lower the levels of achievement. Living in concentrated poverty entails a host of conditions that impact a child's readiness to learn upon entering school and throughout the schooling experience.

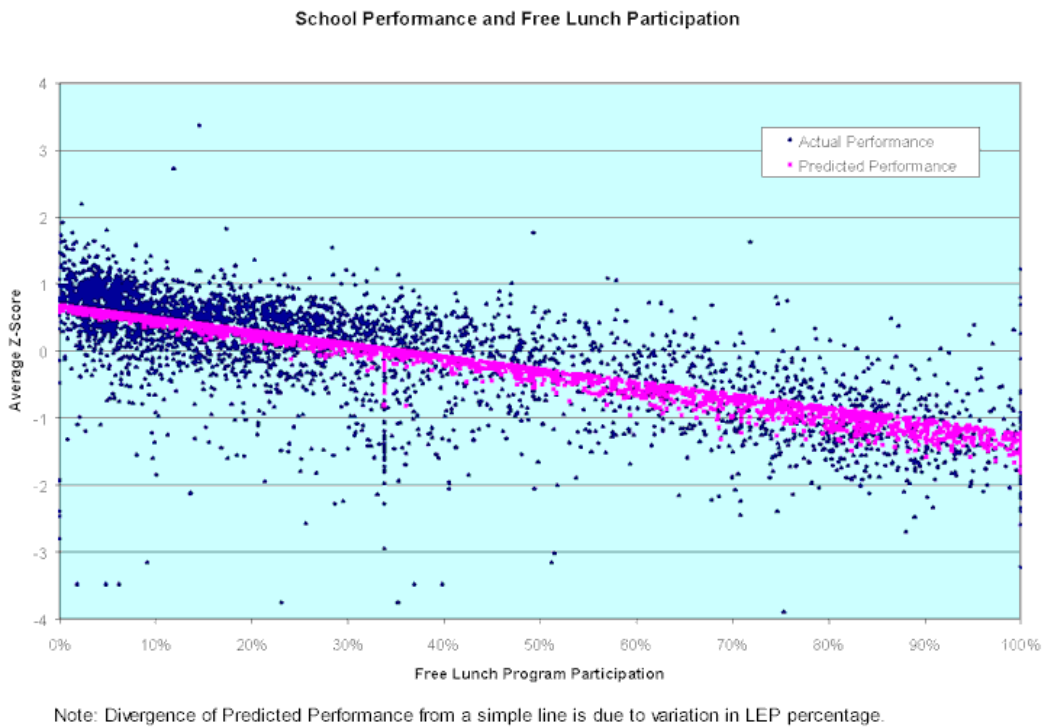


Fig. 1 <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/repcrd2005/information/similar-schools/guide.shtml>



Household poverty is a powerful factor that correlates to student achievement. We also know that there are a number of intervening variables to explain the linkage between poverty and poor school performance.

Poverty in the home, neighborhood poverty, and greater lengths of time in poverty contribute to a number of environmental issues: neighborhood disorder (Hurd, 2013), environmental violence (Hurd, 2013) (Hannon, 2005), poor nutrition (Kleinman, 1998) (Lewit, 1997), childhood neglect (Nikulina, 2011), higher rates of parental incarceration (Hashimoto, 2011) (Hay, 2007), higher crime rates (Hay, 2007), lower incidence of adult diplomas (Schafft K. A., 2008), increased rates of mental illness (Hurd, 2013) (McLeod, 2000) (Phillips, 2002), and higher rates of mobility (Schafft K. A., 2008).

The joblessness and under employment that is prevalent in these neighborhoods sap the sense of well-being and executive functioning from their citizens (Roy, 2014). As this version of poverty persists across generations, the ability to consider and take advantage of education opportunities that could lead to higher economic status and improved quality of life diminishes. This dynamic yields a striking difference between first generation poverty, or poverty associated with immigration, and second, third or fourth generation poverty in impoverished neighborhoods.

The lack of employment and under-employment contribute to an individual's sense of well-being which, in impoverished communities, foster broader neighborhood disorder. This is sometimes characterized by cities and police as "quality of life" issues. These are minor crimes that begin to be tolerated, if not tacitly approved by police, in poor neighborhoods, especially when they would not be tolerated in wealthier areas of the city. In addition to these minor crimes, poor neighborhoods have an increased incidence of violence, making children in poverty more likely to be victims or witnesses of violence, both of which make children very susceptible

to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Young children exposed to 5 or more significant adverse experiences in the first three years of childhood face a 76% likelihood of having one or more delays in their language, emotional or brain development.

<http://www.recognizetrauma.org/statistics.php>).

Additionally, poverty reinforces cycles of household mobility, which affects student mobility. The rates of eviction and foreclosure in poor neighborhoods are elevated in comparison to working class or middle class neighborhoods (Schafft K. A., 2008). In Schenectady, approximately 20% of the student body moves out of the district each year. A typical class (or cohort) has approximately 750 students in it, but by the time they reach graduation year, between 1800 and 2200 students have been members of that cohort. Only 100 students will have stayed in the district for all 13 years. Obviously, turnover such as this is very disruptive to any sense of progression in instruction, but for individual children, a change in school creates a delay in learning equal to approximately 3.5 months (Schafft K. &., 2007).

In turn, each of these variables affects various elements of children's development. Some merely delay a student's ability to make progress in school briefly, but others are far more detrimental. We know that poverty is a vicious cycle. Poverty creates mental illness and mental illness, in return, reinforces poverty (Anakwenze, 2013). Children in impoverished neighborhoods are much more likely to be exposed to environmental violence, food insecurity, and neighborhood disorganization. These factors play into elevated rates of anxiety (Hurd, 2013), Major Depressive Disorder (Dashiff, 2009), and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (Duncan, 2010) (Nikulina, 2011). These are significant mental illnesses that present difficulty for children in many areas of their lives beyond school, but school is a very visible place where the effects can be readily measured.

While the numbers and rates can be chilling, we have to look at specific cases to know exactly what these labels and needs look like. Unfortunately, the challenges these children face go far beyond attentional difficulties or a need for motivation to succeed.

I will illustrate with another example from the Schenectady district. Small City School Districts, like Schenectady, attempt to respond to the significant numbers of children who come to school with delayed skills. However, at the same time there are a number of children who are experiencing a crisis that is difficult to accept as reality. On one typical day, staff in one school is working to deal with a family where the 12-year-old student has been “given” to a gang as payment for protection. Additionally, an 8-year-old child in another family stabbed his grandmother in the eye in an argument over discipline. Every day, each school has new horror stories that are the reality of these children.

The intensity of these behaviors comes not simply because these families are without money. They stem from intense poverty experienced over time. What mother would give her daughter to a gang as tribute unless her life was truly in absolute crisis? The services necessary to extract that 12-year-old student from the gang, help her mother, get the student to focus on school, and to remediate her to grade level expectations are significant to say the least.

Many at-risk children suffer from mental illness and fall significantly behind in their academic progress for a number of reasons. Children with anxiety, depression, or PTSD, have tremendous difficulty focusing and concentrating in the classroom. As the intensity of the illness increases, so does the difficulty engaging in long range planning and other executive functioning skills (Roy, 2014). Additionally, these children have low thresholds of frustration and will act out in the absence of pro-social coping mechanisms.

Researchers have identified numerous academic effects of poverty, including reduced vocabulary (Stinnett, 2014) (Herbers, 2012), delayed reading skills (Stinnett, 2014) (Herbers,

2012), long term limited reading ability (Stinnett, 2014) (Herbers, 2012), reduced academic ability (Thomas, 2003) (Nikulina, 2011), reduced IQ (Nikulina, 2011), suppressed SAT performance (Dixon-Roman, 2013 ), reduced graduation rates (Lacour, 2011) (Wodtke, 2012), reduced college going rates (Bailey, 2011), and higher rates of discipline and suspension (Bloom B, 2013). Children in poor families are more likely to have asthma, are twice as likely to be diagnosed with a learning disability, and five times as likely to be in poor health and to miss more school (Bloom B, 2013).

In the Schenectady district, an estimated 60% -90% of the students, in any cohort, by any measure, are in need of targeted and expanded interventions. When looking at measures of proficiency on State assessments, the rate trends to the higher end, but on more nationally accepted assessments of reading proficiency or emotional well-being, the percentage trends closer to the 60% mark. Again, Schenectady is not remarkable in this number. Nearly all urban districts play out similarly.

Conditions of individual poverty are reinforced by the lack of resources, and the resulting lack of support services, in a community. Schools must therefore have the resources to provide an expanded platform of education and educationally-related services to address extreme disadvantages their at-risk student population bring with them to school each day. When schools lack these resources, they are unable to intervene to remediate low academic performance, get students who are behind back to grade level, and improve overall outcomes for students. When the physical, social and mental health issues so prevalent in the school are not addressed, these conditions fester and move through a predictable pattern of evolution: chronic absenteeism, disruptive behaviors, increased suspensions, and violent expressions of aggression and anger, substance abuse and other physical and mental health issues. Inadequate resources also means that the number of at-risk students who need intensive interventions far outweigh the ability and

capacity of teachers and staff to provide those supports. Without adequate resources, it is likely schools will be unable to break the cycle of poverty and hopelessness experienced by students. Additionally, students who are at-risk regularly come to school unprepared to meet grade level expectations, triggering the need for resources to treat their barriers to learning, especially when students are exhibiting crisis behaviors. Rather than experiencing a baseline state of high quality instruction, the school classroom develops a baseline of crisis response.

Where school budgets of high poverty districts do not have adequate funding, the district simply cannot provide expanded platform of services required to meet the need of the at-risk student population. This has been the case in the Small Cities districts like Schenectady where the State has significantly underfunded the district budgets in recent years. For example, the State has failed to provide Schenectady district \$62 million additional aid under the 2007 Foundation Formula. These are funds that, if available, could provide the intensive interventions necessary to boost student performance, keeping students on track to high school completion and graduation.

#### D. The Expanded Platform of Services to Address the Needs of At-Risk Student in High Poverty Districts

Student and family poverty, and concentrated community and school poverty, are a major factor in low student performance and high drop out and low graduation rates. Schools cannot fully alleviate all the problems associated with concentrated neighborhood and community poverty. They must, however, provide students affected by poverty with an expanded platform of services, targeted to address their needs, to give them the opportunity for a sound basic education and improved outcomes while in school.

Among the resources essential for a sound basic education in the CFE template is an “expanded platform of programs for at-risk students” and “adequate resources for students with

extraordinary needs.” These programs must address both the education and educationally-related needs of at-risk students, such as social and health services to ensure these children are ready to learn. In schools serving high concentrations of poor students such as the Small Cities districts, specific programs, services and interventions must be part of the “expanded platform” that is responsive to student and school needs. This expanded platform must also be provided at levels responsive to the intensity of student need to ensure that all students are ready to learn and teachers can singularly focus on delivering rigorous curriculum and effective instruction.

1. Student and Family Support Team

If we return to that “typical” third grade classroom, we can begin to parse out what services are needed to help these children become successful in school. With any one of the listed conditions, the trauma inflicted upon a child is significant. We know that children of incarcerated parents have increased incidence of mental health issues, violence, and arrests. We also know that people living in extremely impoverished environments are far more likely to be under the control of the criminal justice system. Serving these students requires sufficient numbers of qualified personnel and resources to tailor the school environment to the needs of at-risk students.

- a. Social Workers

First and foremost, a complement of trained school social workers are required to intervene to address the social, behavioral and mental health needs of at-risk students. High poverty schools require a ratio of students to social workers that allows these vital support staff to work with students and their families to develop new routines and coping mechanisms. The school also should have at least one professional whose sole job is to coordinate services and treatment objectives between school service providers and county providers like Child Protective Services or the Department of Social Services. Oftentimes, the classroom teacher needs

additional support in trying to understand the behavior of these children and assistance in developing a plan to shape the behavior into more pro-social patterns. Toward this end, behavioral specialists or psychologists are necessary supports to be added at the school and district level.

The dynamic challenges created by poverty require that the school address concerns with both individual students as well as the environments in which they exist. Students with PTSD require an elevated level of service in an intensive therapeutic educational environment. This generally means a reduced number of students in the room, a full or part-time social worker attached to the class, and family therapy sessions, as well. The National Association of Social Workers Standards for School Social Work Services recommends a ratio of 1:250 general education students and a ratio of 1:50 when the needs of those students are more intense, as I have described here.

b. School Nurses

School nurses play a critical role in identification of health and mental health problems in children. They provide acute care, health screenings, and are often the person administering all medications that children need for asthma, diabetes, anxiety, or attentional difficulties. The recommended standard for nurse ratios when students have any special health needs is 1:225 students or 1:125 if the health needs are more complex (Pediatrics, vol 121, 2008).

c. Guidance Counselors

If we shift our focus from these third graders and imagine a group of teenagers, it becomes important for us to have monitoring of progress toward graduation, college visits, mentors, and internship experiences for these students. The research is clear that interventions in later years are much more limited in their success. The strategies that are most effective are relationship based. In addition, the schools with older students need specific and targeted gang

prevention programs and services. Gangs offer so much of what we describe above: a place of belonging, protection, purpose. Gangs see the children who suffer as an opportunity. The gang leaders know that these are vulnerable kids and understand the weaknesses that make them susceptible to gang life. Without intervention, the number of students who slip into involvement with gangs grows. This is important given that the American School Counselor Association recommends a ratio of 1:250 school counselors to students.

d. Parent and Community Liaisons

To address the environment, schools need to hire family engagement coordinators. These positions help families restore order and hope to their lives. Families need assistance in learning how to engage with school, how to advocate for their child, and ensure that the school has their child's best interest at heart. They also act as neighborhood catalysts, bringing about neighborhood organization and a better sense of order and caring throughout the neighborhood.

This complement of support staff – social worker, school nurse, guidance counselor and parent liaison – comprise a “Family and Student Support Team” that can coordinate the responses and interventions for both students and families based on a holistic assessment of need. They must work in teams to coordinate services and ensure that children are ready to learn. This comprehensive, rather than piecemeal or episodic, approach is essential to ensure teachers and principals, whose main job is to deliver the curriculum, do not have to spend valuable instructional time dealing with health, social, psychological and behavioral issues and other problems that impact student readiness to learn while in the classroom..

## 2. Academic Interventions for At-Risk Students

Schools with high concentrations of at-risk students must continually assess whether students are progressing satisfactorily, on grade level, and are on track throughout the K-12



grade span. This will allow teachers to identify those students who are falling behind and at risk of academic failure, and then take proactive action to intervene with appropriate additional supports. In addition to the educationally-related supports described above, these students will need some specific academic supports. These enhanced needs implicate each of the basic input categories identified in CFE: teaching, facilities, and instrumentalities of learning.

a. Intensive Math and Literacy Interventions

Specialized reading instruction for students who are behind in basic language arts (reading) and mathematics in the early grades is among the most effective interventions educators have to achieve better outcomes for students. Reading and math specialists, along with a complement of reading and math tutors, are required to work with the classroom teacher to promptly identify when students are not performing on grade level, and provide more intensive small group or one-on-one instructional interventions, are essential in high poverty districts. Because these students have missed many of the formative literacy experiences in their early years, it takes an elevated level of expertise to help them develop these skills without falling farther behind their peers. These reading and math specialists and tutors can tailor the intensive literacy program to address the needs of students, prevent them from falling further behind, and ensure they progress to grade level as quickly as possible.

This early intervention and progress monitoring are extremely important for two key reasons. First, in students' early years, they are most able to learn specific skills related to language acquisition. As children grow older it becomes more difficult for them to build phonemic awareness (associations of letters and sounds as meaning making code). Second, catching a delay early on minimizes the gap between a struggling student and the expected level of performance. Trying to close this gap after four, six, or eight years of falling behind is infinitely more difficult. These reasons are compounded by the fact that students living in

intense poverty are much more likely to have significantly impaired ability to acquire language skills.

b. Extended learning time

In addition to intensive early literacy interventions described above, students who are behind specific subject course and grade level, will need “more time on task” -- also known as “extended learning time” – to improve and sustain academic progress. Extended learning time is a particularly effective strategy for middle and high school students to ensure progress at grade level and in language arts, math, science and other coursework, which is necessary to sustain student progress towards high school completion and graduation. Extended learning time includes both academic instruction after the regular school day or extended school year academic programs to prevent “summer learning loss,” a significant issue for students living in high poverty communities. Extending the school day/year affords for the extra learning time that at-risk students often need to remediate deficits without losing more ground. Another benefit is that it keeps the students busy and engaged in productive and healthy programming during times when they would otherwise be on the street in the midst of the neighborhood disorganization.

c. AIS and RtI

Academic Intervention Services and Response to Intervention are both mandated programs that schools must have in place for struggling students to ensure that they catch up to their peers and are not unnecessarily classified as a student with a disability. AIS is a NYS mandated program that mandates students receive specialized, additional service in their area of difficulty, especially related to their performance on NYS Assessments. RtI is a federally mandated program that demands schools implement evidence based interventions in increasing intensity prior to referral to the committee on special education. This progression of increasing intensity necessitates

smaller and smaller student to staff ratios. Additionally, these evidence based practices require additional training, support, and materials in order for them to be implemented with fidelity.

Finally, it is important to note high poverty schools that have proven successful with improving education outcomes for at-risk students utilize the expanded platform of services and programs described above to continually focus on, and reassess, the academic, social and health needs of this vulnerable student population. These resources allow schools to develop an internally imposed accountability system that consists of frequent assessments of student progress and staff collaboration and analysis of those results. Staff also need the time to develop new, creative solutions that can be replicated at scale. (Reeves, 2003).

#### E. Conclusions

The impact of family and community poverty on the education opportunities and outcomes presents difficult and stubborn challenges for teachers, staff and leadership in districts serving these high concentrations of at-risk students. As the CFE ruling makes clear, high poverty districts have a responsibility to address the needs of students who are academically at-risk due to the impact of poverty on their families, lives and neighborhoods by having those resources proven effective in ameliorating those impacts when they manifest in school and in class to impede progress in student learning. The effect of poverty on a child's ability to be successful in school is readily discernable in both the literature regarding poverty as well as the hard data of student achievement, suspension rates, and dropout rates.

High poverty districts must have adequate funding to provide a robust platform of programs and services which, at a minimum, must include the specific interventions set forth in this report. As the CFE ruling makes clear, without this expanded set of services, at-risk students will continue to be deprived of access a meaningful high school education, the definition of a sound basic education guaranteed to all children under the New York constitution. This is

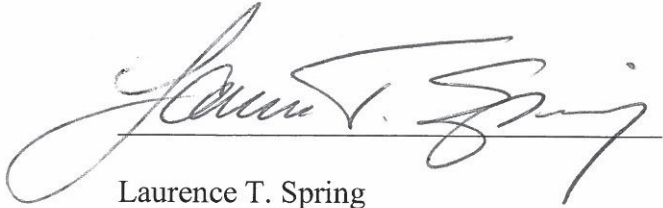
especially true for children who suffer from intense poverty, prolonged poverty or live in neighborhoods with very high rates of poverty.

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I hereby affirm that the foregoing report is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.



Laurence T. Spring

Sworn to and subscribed before me on this  
12 day of November 2014



Notary Public

KIMBERLY M. LEWIS  
Notary Public, State of New York  
No. 02LE6046314  
Qualified in Schenectady County  
Commission Expires Aug. 14, 20 18