Research Brief
Poverty

Question: What is being done to work with students from low SES?

Summary of Findings:

How many people reading this brief believes they could financially survive in a household of four people on $19,784 a year? Yet, this was the official poverty threshold as determined by the federal government for 2005. During this same year, 17% of children under 18 lived below the poverty line, of which 14% were white, 11% Asian, 28% Hispanic and 34% black or one out of six people under 21 years of age lived in poverty *(Education and Poverty; Poverty in the United States)*. Children who are considered to be immigrants are more likely to be poor; one out of five children under 18 has a least one foreign-born parent (*Poverty in the United States*). Pupils who are living at or near the poverty line are exposed to more high risk factors than those who are considered to come from middle or upper income levels. Some of those factors include:

- impaired brain development
- exposure to environmental toxins
- poor nutrition
- a parent, often the mother, who suffers from depression
- parental substance abuse
- experience violent crime
- inferior child care
- minimal cognitive stimulation
- poor health
- mental issues/illness
- school attendance issues
- lower reading and/or math achievement
- higher school drop-out rates
- aggression and emotional concerns

The majority of public schools in the United States have students who live at or near the poverty level, yet it is incumbent upon the schools to provide equal access to and an equitable program for all of their students.

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The literature is rich with examples of programs that high schools are doing to provide appropriate and realistic avenues for these students to move out of the cycle of poverty. From 2002-2006, NASSP (National Association of Secondary School Principals) with financial support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, sponsored a program examining 25 high functioning schools with at least 50% minority/high poverty population, 50% who qualify for free/reduced meals and from this group, at least 90% attend some sort of post-secondary educational program (http://www.principals.org/s_nassp/sec.asp?CID=66&DID=52669). Although each school was unique, regardless of their location and diverse ethnic populations, they shared many common characteristics:

- believed every student can and will learn
- had a major emphasis on math and literacy
- offered professional development on a regular basis (i.e. most of them were weekly, some through early dismissals and others during planning periods)
- utilized a shared governance structure
- wrote and were awarded grants to help implement and/or support programs (i.e. tutoring, parent education, additional support staff, etc.)
- worked with the 7th and 8th grade students and faculty (i.e. keeping the high school library open until 7 PM three nights a week and inviting the 8th grade students to use it; having students visit the high school and meet with the counselors)
- provided a specific program for 9th graders to help them adjust and be integrated into the high school (i.e. having an advisory class where students are taught note-taking, study and keyboarding skills, setting up goals and planning for the future, in addition to making a valuable connection with an adult)
- expected every student to submit at least one post-secondary education application (i.e. some schools paid the application fee for the first one)
- worked closely with a counselor or other adult to devise an individualized career/post-secondary plan
- implemented smaller learning communities (i.e. providing interest based programs such as industrial engineering, maritime, financial, travel and tourism, environmental and teaching)
- had concurrent enrollment with local colleges. (i.e. in one case, a local university and school worked together to lower class sizes, team teach,

provide opportunities for teachers to take courses free of charge and do summer research (http://www.principals.org/s_nassp/bin.asp?CID=782&DID=52053&DOC=FILE.PDF).

- developed partnerships and internships with local businesses and community
- offered numerous opportunities yearly for parent education, in their primary language when possible (i.e. the topics most commonly covered were college applications and financial aid, and parenting skills)
- provided tutoring before and after school where students could get help with any subject, in particular math and language arts (i.e. one school also had tutoring in the evenings so parents could attend if so desired)

Online Resources:

- AVID
  Advancement via Individual Determination
  This is the HOME page that describes this program, established primarily to help students in the middle attain higher academic levels.
  http://www.avidonline.org/info/?tabid=1&ID=548

- Children in poverty
  This article cites statistics about children in poverty and their risk factors.
  http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/indicators/4Poverty.cfm

- Demonstrating poverty in a multicultural education course: Buying school supplies with limited funds multicultural education
  This is a description of an activity from a college class, where students had to purchase school supplies for $6. The students' responses to this activity are included.
  http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3935/is_200601/ai_n17186316

- Education
  A few reasons why children need an education are given in this article.
  http://www.stopchildpoverty.org/learn/bigpicture/education/

- Education and poverty

This is an annotated reference list that contains information on research in the field of poverty and education.
http://www.irp.wisc.edu/research/education.htm

- Poverty
  This is a basic fact sheet with access to the Census Bureau's information on poverty.
  http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/poverty.html

- Poverty in the United States
  Brief facts on poverty in the United States are provided in this piece.
  http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/placeatthetable/uspoverty.htm

- Poverty thresholds for 2005 by size of family and number of related children under 18
  This site lists the poverty thresholds for individuals and families for 2005.
  http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/threshld/thresh05.html

- Q & A with Ruby Payne
  This is a brief interview with Ruby Payne about what information students in poverty need in order to survive and navigate the middle-class world.
  http://www.csba.org/qa/payne.htm

Schools
- 2005 Breakthrough schools
  A list with active links and descriptions to schools that NASSP determined as "Breakthroughs" are provided.
  http://www.principals.org/s_nassp/sec.asp?CID=782&DID=52044

- 2006 Breakthrough schools
  A list with active links and descriptions to schools that NASSP determined as "Breakthroughs" are provided.
  http://www.principals.org/s_nassp/sec_inside.asp?CID=984&DID=53857

- Breakthrough schools project
  This is the HOME page for this project where a full description is provided.
  http://www.principals.org/s_nassp/sec.asp?CID=66&DID=52669

- A collaborative approach to performance-Crownpoint High School-Crownpoint, New Mexico
  http://www.principals.org/s_nassp/bin.asp?CID=984&DID=53860&DOC=FILE.PDF

- A winning combination-University Park Campus School-Worcester, Massachusetts
  http://www.principals.org/s_nassp/bin.asp?CID=782&DID=52053&DOC=FILE.PDF

- Believing in student achievement-James Madison High School-San Diego, California
  http://www.principals.org/s_nassp/bin.asp?CID=984&DID=53859&DOC=FILE.PDF

- Building the future on knowledge-Arroyo High School-El Monte, California
  http://www.principals.org/s_nassp/bin.asp?CID=782&DID=52055&DOC=FILE.PDF

- Committed to the future- Edcouch-Elsa High School- Edcouch, Texas
  http://www.principals.org/s_nassp/bin.asp?CID=782&DID=52050&DOC=FILE.PDF

- Embracing Reform – James Campbell High School-Ewa Beach, Hawaii
  http://www.principals.org/s_nassp/bin.asp?CID=782&DID=52048&DOC=FILE.PDF

- Influence by instructional leadership-Mabton Junior/Senior High School-Mabton, Washington
  http://www.principals.org/s_nassp/bin.asp?CID=984&DID=53858&DOC=FILE.PDF

http://www.educationpartnerships.org/

- Raising expectations-Velma Jackson Magnet High School-Camden, Mississippi
  http://www.principals.org/s_nassp/bin.asp?CID=782&DID=52051&DOC=FILE.PDF

- Targeting a reform strategy-Poinciana High School-Kissimmee, Florida
  http://www.principals.org/s_nassp/bin.asp?CID=984&DID=53861&DOC=FILE.PDF

- The Power of Professional Preparation-Duncan Polytechnical High School- Fresno, California
  http://www.principals.org/s_nassp/bin.asp?CID=782&DID=52053&DOC=FILE.PDF

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