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Effects of Resource Allocation on Student Academic Achievement and Self-Perceptions of Success in an Urban Setting

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Effects of Resource Allocation on Student Academic Achievement and Self-Perceptions of

Success in an Urban Setting

by

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A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements of the Degree of

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SIGNATURE PAGE

This Capstone Thesis has been presented to and approved by the faculty of the

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ABSTRACT

Civil Rights legislation, now 50 years old, *de facto* segregation based on socioeconomic factors, such as poverty and ethnicity in urban areas translates into the surrounding schools, with a legacy of limited funding, reduced services, and teachers with limited training to successfully engage students in high poverty areas. This study is an examination of teacher perceptions of the effect of resource allocation on student academic achievement ands student self-perceptions of success.

Within urban settings, districts have changed little to reduce *de facto* segregation in schools as a whole, and create equal opportunities for all children. What are the effects limited resource allocation has on student learning in urban elementary school districts? A review of the literature reveals that in school settings with a majority of students of color do not receive the same resources as schools with a majority of Caucasian students, thus limiting student learning in the classroom. Student self-perceptions may also be affected by resource allocation.

This study follows a qualitative design using interview protocol with open-ended questions. Four teachers were purposely selected from schools with different populations and varying resource allocations. These teachers formed a purposive sample, two of whom are from a low wealth area and two are from a high wealth area. They were asked to participate in an interview, which explored their perceptions of the effect of resource allocation on student academic performance, comparing high wealth and low wealth school settings.

Results indicated that there is a difference in the variety of resources students receive based on the school they attend. The main factor was the support from the parents and community. Those at a high wealth school donated much more than those at the low wealth school. The parents at a high wealth school worked to fund the salaries of additional specialty

teachers for pullout classes such as art and music. While the parents at the low wealth schools

may want these classes for their students, they don't have the funds to do so.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In high school I discovered that while segregation is against the law, it still occurs in schools. My first encounter with experiencing segregation was in high school when a new school opened, and what was called "white flight" occurred. The new elaborate school attracted the wealthy parents who could afford to drive their children to a school far from home. These parents were able to put more money into their child's education which led to problems in the local school such as the lack of advanced placement classes, less-experienced teachers as the senior teachers transferred to the new school, thus creating a gap between the schools. By default the school became the one that served students from low income families. Students who remained at the original school did not have adequate resources that are tied to funding and enrollment levels.   A few years later, the district leadership was considering reframing the boundaries of the middle and high schools. This change would take a majority of the students currently served in the high wealth school and place them in the low wealth school.

Parents held many meetings giving reasons why they did not want their students to be placed at different schools. They stated that student test scores at the low income school were below test scores of students at the high income school. Additionally parents argued that that their children would not be safe at the low wealth school. Parent reluctance to re-balance enrollment at the two schools, left one school with more resources than the other school. Enrollment was a factor in allocation of resources, thus leading to limited resources to the low-enrolled school in comprising to the enriched resources at the high-enrolled school.

Parents made the decision to send their children to one school over another, based on geographical location. When district officials proposed redrawing boundaries, parents threatened to move in order to keep their children at the high wealth school.

Parents were also hesitant to send their children to the low wealth school because of their perceptions of socioeconomic factors, threats of gang affiliation, perceived access to the drug culture, among other things. It appeared that parents were looking to maintain a certain comfort level among people with perceived similarities. This de facto socioeconomic segregation led to unbalanced enrollment which resulted in differentiation of resource allocation between high wealth and low wealth areas.

Statement of the Problem

In many schools and districts today, students look around their classroom and see a wide variety of students. However, in other schools the students look around and see a classroom full of peers who look like them. Regardless if they are all a minority or majority racial group, this perception has an effect, on students themselves, and the community. These differences can affect teachers, student academic learning, and student perceptions of their own success. Students in areas where there are predominantly low income also suffer because of resource allocation and level of experience of teachers and other professionals.

Unfortunately, many people accept this de facto segregation as normal and the problems associated with this line of thinking continue. Officials with the power of allocating resources and hiring teachers are not helping schools at a low socioeconomic level.   In the case described in the opening paragraphs, school officials postponed the boundary decision to cater to the vocal parents who were against the move. This action then had an effect on students from low socioeconomic levels, keeping resources limited when compared to the high wealth school.

School officials allow parents to create minority schools by having an open enrollment policy and allowing students to transfer out of neighborhood schools. For example transfers are accepted based on student interest in taking a language, when in fact, the underlying reason may be to allow the student to enroll in a school sport. Where transferring based on sports offerings is not permitted, transfers to take a certain program not offered at the neighborhood school is valid.

The intent of this research is to raise awareness of the socioeconomic factors that influence resource allocation, and to promote rebalancing resources in order to promote equity regardless of income. By creating fixed school boundaries that include people from all socioeconomic backgrounds, districts will generate equality among their schools.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is to show that segregation does have an effect on the resources and caliber of teachers provided to schools. This directly affects the students who are not being allowed to reach the same potential as those in high wealth schools. In addition, people need to know that segregation is still a problem that appears in various forms of access to resources, one that has not been resolved even after the civil rights movement.   Parents and teachers are responsible for teaching students the importance of integration and acceptance of all.

Purpose of the Study

This paper highlights the problem of *de facto* segregation based on socioeconomic factors and their effect on resource allocation. This includes the resource allocation for each school and how the students are impacted. The study also examines how students at low wealth schools do not have access to experienced, senior teachers or those with a high level of training. These factors influence student learning and ability to grow as learners and leaders.

Consequently, the purpose of this paper is to shed light on the problem and bring attention to the need for equal opportunities for all students. Resource allocation is a factor to consider in establishing equity among students.

Background Information

Elementary schools are placed within a neighborhood to provide for the students who live there. This means that schools in high-wealth areas are attended by students who come from families with more money where students at low wealth schools generally have a lower family income. While the schools are all run by the states each one is different based on the people that attend it. At high-wealth schools, parents have much more time and money to donate thus increasing their child's school experience. There have been programs implemented to assist with this gap such as Title 1 but many students at low wealth schools still suffer because of the lack of resources. It is the modern day version of separate but equal.

It has been identified in the academic research that schools in low income areas do not receive the same resources as those in wealthier neighborhoods. This can lead to students having inadequate materials to learn the course material required for each grade. This puts them behind and they continue to struggle in school. Children in poor areas tend to be of color leading to a relationship between wealth, race and school success. Children deserve to have the same resources regardless of their race of socioeconomic background.

Research Questions

1. How does the socio-economic demographic of a school location affect their resource allocation?

2. How does resource allocation affect students' academic success and student self-

   perceptions of success?

Definition of Terms

·   Race: a category of humankind that shares certain distinctive physical traits (Merriam-

   Webster, Inc., 2003)

·   Socioeconomic: of, relating to, or involving a combination of social and economic factors

   (Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003)

·   High wealth: A school where the average income of families is greater than $70,000 a

   year

·   Low wealth: A school where the average income of families is less than $70,000 a year

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

This review of the literature includes key articles from academic library sources. Most articles come from peer reviewed sources related to the focus of the research study, resource allocation differences between low wealth and high wealth schools. The review is organized in the following sections: Historical Context of Schooling, Student Academic Performance, and Resources Available to Students.

Historical Context of Schooling

Schooling has always been a way of advancing in society. Once knowledge is gained people understand that there are various views of the world and can form their own opinions rather than following society. Education is important for everyone because it is impossible to know who will be able to make a difference in the world. Unfortunately for many people school has not always been an option. During slavery, African Americans were not able to be educated (Mondale & Bernard, 2001, p.123). This was partially because the elite knew that education was power and they did not want their slaves to have a sense of power.

When they were freed, black children could attend school be the country was still segregated. It was not until Brown vs. Board of Education (Mondale & Bernard, 2001, p.124) that things began to change for the better. The new law stated that schools can be separated by race but must have equal opportunities.

This was not the case however, the black schools received books, but they were the old ones from the white schools. Eventually, integration occurred and children of all races are able to be in one classroom receiving the same opportunities as the majority race.

Student Academic Performance

Many schools struggle with how to perform better. Logan, Minca and Adar (2012) discuss why this is related to the demographics of a school. The article works to support that children's race identification affects their performance in the classroom and what school they attend. They believe schools in the United States are still segregated and it is harming students' abilities to learn.

The focus is on the difference between predominantly white and Asian schools compared to schools attended by blacks, Hispanics and Native Americans. It has been discovered "that unlike the typical white child who attends a public school in which most of the children are above the poverty line, the typical black of Hispanic child attends a public school in which most of the children are below the poverty line" (Logan, Minca & Adar, 2012, p.288). According to a chart of test scores in school, race is closely related to how well a student performs in a test situation. This correlation between races and test scores give meaning to the problem of segregated schools.

Logan, Minca and Adar (2012) use a variety of charts with statistics about races and test scores. They also look into the percentage of people in categories based on poverty and where they live. In addition, the authors reference many court cases about race and the problems before and following them. Many other researchers are also referenced for either their beneficial contributions to the subject or their in adequate research.

The authors discovered that many minority students attend schools that have "higher student poverty levels, lower teacher experiences, larger size and worse community locations than white and Asian students were" (Logan et al., 2012, p.288). This his led to minority students with overall lower test scores in math and reading in various poverty classes as well as geographic locations. They found that there are inequalities between schools both in performance and race. Because this study was limited to public schools, it takes away the variable of private schools, which are costly. These results draw attention to the need for equal schools across the country.

This article helped me to realize that there is a problem in schools regarding racial segregation. I found that it is not only a problem occurring in a few schools but across the country. Many articles I found talked primarily about the presence of segregation in southern elementary schools, but this article did not specify by state but other categories covering a wider population. This article relates to my discussion of how having a segregated school affects the students that attend it. It might seem like an avoidable occurrence based on school location but the teachers are the ones who can change how the students view school and their participation level in class.

Clark and Maas (2012) examine segregation within Los Angeles neighborhoods and schools as well as the test scores of these schools. The focus is on elementary schools are more specific to neighborhoods than high schools that contain multiple elementary schools.   The researchers gathered qualitative data to look at the relationship between segregation in neighborhoods and schools as well as sixth grade test scores. Math and reading scores were analyzed. The test scores were compared to the number of students receiving free lunch and family income. The researchers also examined the relationship between test scores and the

teacher to student ratio. Results indicated that "Across all Los Angeles County school districts, math and reading scores increase with increasing median household incomes, decline with the percentage of students receiving free lunch and increase with increasing pupil teacher ratios" (Clark & Maas, 2012, p.349).

While there was a direct correlation between income and scores, no consistent correlation was found between teacher-student ratios and scores. No substantial relationship between race and test scores was observed. A small correlation was found comparing the segregation of Caucasian and Hispanic students, revealing that race can have an effect on test scores.

This study helped me to look at the situation in terms of whether it was an issue of race or socioeconomics. To look further into the issue of racial segregation I would need to observe if people of different races generally earn less income compared to others. The problem of low test scores in specific schools could be a combination of multiple factors. This article will help me in my research by looking at the different areas of a county as well as of specific school districts in terms of race and income compared to student performance.

Resources Available to Students

The covert practice of segregation throughout the country has an effect on student academic performance. Schools in geographic locations vary in a way that is linked by many factors such as family socioeconomic level, parent education, and ethnicity. This leads to a difference in student access to education, and its level of quality based on where students live.

In a study Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service (2013) created based on the 2010 US census a map documents geographically by ethnicity information from census data in 2010.

This information maps the actual residential setting of people from diverse backgrounds. It also displays ethnic divisions in urban settings.

This map displays that the division in schools is related to the division in the city. Public schools, which enroll students from local neighborhoods, become segregated in terms of student body.

The researcher of this study uses a collection of data from the population of the United States Census. This information was then mapped by using dots to show ethnic clusters across the country. The information is assumed correct as per census practices in obtaining information from households in the United States every ten years.

The Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service (2013) found that there are many areas that are drastically segregated. By using a graphic display of dots of different colors, the resulting table provides visual display that buildings the information is more accessible to the general population and allows for others to see concentrations of races. The colors and smaller dots also give cities that are more diverse to show the mix of colors. When cities such as Detroit are looked at closer, it is obvious that there is a dividing line between people of various races leading to a difference in schools in those neighborhoods.

This article helped me to realize that the other articles about racial division are accurate and supported by this map. This map also allows me to look at specific schools I can compare schools in homogenous locations with those in very diverse locations to see a difference between the two with regards to test scores.

Summary

The literature concluded that segregation is still a problem in today's society and it is affecting students. Not only are student test scores low in part due to the lack of resources, but also their teachers may be less experienced. While schools do not turn away students based on race, cities are divided geographically leading the schools to also be divided. This is not the fault of the children, but they suffer because their parents cannot support lavish programs at the schools.

CHAPTER III METHOD

Overview

This research follows a qualitative method design using interviews, open-ended questions and a purposive sample of teachers. These interviews took place with teachers who have worked in classes at schools of high-wealth or low wealth, based on average family income levels. This research study addressed the following questions: How does the socio-economic demographic of a school location affect their resource allocation? How does resource allocation affect student academic success?

The review of literature indicated a relationship between school resource allocation, student academic achievement and self-perceptions. In addition, the review of the literature reiterates the ongoing problem of *de facto* segregation based on socioeconomic standing and teacher's role in creating equality between schools.

Ethical Standards

This study adheres to the ethical standards established by the American Psychological Association (2010) that safeguards participation of human subjects in research. Additionally, this study was reviewed by the Dominican University of California Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS), approved, and assigned #10219

Participants

The researcher interviewed 3 teachers, identified by numbers 2 through 4. One of the teachers is from a high-wealth area while two of them are from low-wealth areas. They are from the greater San Francisco area and Central California. These participants were purposely chosen because they teach at schools that represent a spectrum of wealth based on family income. Due

to their background and experience these teachers could best answer the questions related to my research. I personally know the teachers interviewed and contacted them directly through email and telephone calls. The three female teachers chosen are Caucasian. Teachers 2 and 3 teach at the low wealth schools are in their 40s and have been teaching for approximately fifteen years. Teacher number 4 is teaching at a high wealth school, is in her 40s and has been teaching for about ten years.

Procedures

I received approval from the IRB committee prior to beginning research. I then personally contacted teachers identified for this study by email. After describing the procedure and research topic, I asked for their approval to interview them and use their anonymous responses in my research. Those interviewed signed the waiver to release their answers and confirm they understood the process. Next, we established a time to talk over the telephone and the interview took place where I asked questions and recorded their answers by taking notes.

Data Analysis

I analyzed the data by comparing the teacher responses to the interview questions. I reviewed their responses while keeping in mind the socioeconomic background of their schools. This was then compared to the review of the literature and similarities and differences were identified.

CHAPTER IV FINDINGS

Summary of Participants, Data, and Site

A total of three people participated in the interview process. They came from two school districts in Northern California. They had an average of 15 years of teaching experience in the primary grades, first and second grade.

Summary of Findings

2. Second Grade Teacher in a Low Wealth School- Teacher written responses to questions via email

1. *What racial or ethnic groups are represented in your school?*

1% American Indian, 12% Asian, 2% Pacific Islander, 4% Filipino, 29% Hispanic, 15% African American, 32% White, 5% 2 or more Races.

2. *Describe the extent and quality of the resources in your school including textbooks, materials and technology.*

In 2012 the district adopted the GO Math program to align with the Common Core standards. The district provides teachers' manuals, student books and standards practice book (that we use for homework) and access to lots of online materials that the students can also access from home. I think the Open Court Curriculum was adopted in 1998 and updated around 2002. This includes teachers' manuals, first readers and anthologies for the students, consumable decodable books, and worksheets that go over standards for comprehension and language arts standards as well as spelling and vocabulary. We have received training on how to align OC with the Common Core but it is definitely piecemeal. Science is MacMillan/McGraw

Hill and that was adopted about 2007 I think. It includes teachers' manuals and other resources and a student textbook and consumable workbook. I enjoy the program. Social Studies textbooks are ok. There are teachers' manuals/resources and a textbook as well as a smaller more kid friendly textbook. This is the last year the district is buying the consumable student workbook. I have not had as good of a time with that program.   It seems a little abstract at times for 2nd graders. Technology – we have two computer labs. One they go to with a computer teacher once a week and do Accelerated Reader and other software programs like typing and math. The other lab we go to on our own every one in a while and I wish I could utilize it more.

In the classroom there is a teacher computer and 2 student computers. They are slow and outdated, especially the student computers. There is also an ELMO (projector) in each classroom. The school just got a cart of Chrome Books for testing, not sure yet how much they will or can be used for other things.

3. *Describe the average mathematics and language arts test scores/grades of the students in your classroom.*

The students in my classroom this trimester are scoring an average of: Reading 84%, Writing 87%, Spelling 84%, Math 86%.

4. *Describe the differences, if any,*

a. *between the performance of boys and girls*

b. *between or among the performance of children from various socioeconomic levels*

c. *between or among children from different racial or ethnic backgrounds*

This year the girls are scoring on average better than the boys. That's not always been the case between or among the performance of children from various socioeconomic levels. The students from lower socio-economic backgrounds struggle more than the others. There are a few

exceptions but those with free-lunch do seem to have lower scores and abilities between or among children from different racial or ethnic backgrounds.

The students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds do not seem to have much difference. I have Asian, Hispanic, White and African American students and they fall from high to low in academics.

5. *What is your perception of the view of your school a) by peers in the school district and b) by the public in general? Describe how these perceptions affect the overall attitude of your school staff and students.*

I think the school is a respected school in our district; I don't have much interaction with the rest of the district, but what I do in meetings and trainings it seems like it is well thought of.

I think public perception of my school is good. I think families in the neighborhood as well as outside think it is a good school.

Most of the school staff work very well together and this helps with transitions between grade levels. Overall it is positive, but frustrating when parents don't follow through either on communication or meetings, etc. Most parents are supportive but the ones who are not can cause more work.

6. *What are the advantages/disadvantages of your school setting regardless of family income?*

My school has a great sense of community. Even as the population has changed over the years the sense of belonging remains pretty strong. Our staff has been very stable with little turnover and I think that helps a lot. Our school also has many ways to communicate with families (emails, phone calls, paper newsletters) so we can reach families regardless of their income level.

7. *Describe other things that a teacher looks for in understanding and working with students in a mixed race setting, particularly noting differences among children from low income/high poverty areas.*

Teachers are always looking for a way to connect with students. It's always special for a student to know that a teacher knows about them and what they do outside of school. It helps the students to be more motivated. These aspects help with different races and income levels. They all gain a sense of belonging.

3. Second Grade Teacher at Low Wealth School- Teacher written responses to questions via email

1. *What racial or ethnic groups are represented in your school?*

1% American Indian, 12% Asian, 2% Pacific Islander, 4% Filipino, 29% Hispanic, 15% African American, 32% White, 5% 2 or more Races.

2. *Describe the extent and quality of the resources in your school including textbooks, materials and technology.*

The textbooks for math are new since we just adopted the GO Math program in the 2012-2013 school year. The textbooks for reading are approximately 13 years old. They are worn to say the least. Science books are sufficient. Social studies textbooks are sufficient as well. The second grade students have workbooks for each of these. The science workbook is a consolidated amount of information with area for written answers. The social studies workbooks are being phased out next year. They are too simplistic for the grade level. The school has just received Chrome Books for testing for grades 3-6. Wi-Fi was just installed but is sometimes hard to access in some buildings. Each class has a document camera however if a projector light burns out they are costly and may take a while to be replaced.

3. *Describe the average mathematics and language arts test scores/grades of the students in your classroom.*

The students in my classroom scored an average of: Math 78%, Reading 83%, Spelling 76% , Writing 83%. Since there is no state test in first grade, these are the average classroom assessments for their second trimester.

4. *Describe the differences, if any,*

a. *between the performance of boys and girls*

b. *between or among the performance of children from various socioeconomic levels*

c. *between or among children from different racial or ethnic backgrounds*

This year my class does have more boys in it and more of the boys are struggling with all areas of the curriculum. The issues the boys have are more evident than the issues the girls are having. I do have some high achieving boys but more lower performing boys than girls.

This year's class I have really noticed that many of the students who are struggling are also students who I believe are in a lower socioeconomic level. The children who have the single parent incomes, live within the school boundaries and bring their lunch each day are in general doing better academically. I do have students which cross those lines. I have 2 students who I believe fall into a lower socioeconomic area who are doing well in school. Teachers are not allowed to know which students fall into a lower economic level so even these are just speculation. We are asked to focus on these students but we are not allowed to know which students they are.

This year the boys in my class who are African American are struggling more than most of the others. The one girl I have who is African American is excelling in all areas. The two boys who are Asian (Indian) are both struggling. One struggles in all areas and is an English

Language Learners (ELL) student. The other is not an ELL student and does not struggle as much. My girls who struggle the most are both Hispanic. My highest students are Chinese, Filipino, White, and Hispanic of both boys and girls. This is in this year's class only. Last year's class looked very different.

5. *What is your perception of the view of your school a) by peers in the school district and b) by the public in general? Describe how these perceptions affect the overall attitude of your school staff and students.*

   I believe that the school is respected in the district by my peers. Reaction from other teachers when they hear I work there they are usually positive and recognize it as a good school. At least this is my perception. If they are not that familiar with it, it is just like any other school.

   The public looks at my school as being a good school. It is very much a family. Once you have worked at or attended the school you are part of the family. I believe parents and students feel this and I know staff has. The public is aware that the make up of the school has changed quite a bit over the past 8 years. The changes have added new challenges to the school community. The families feel a part of the school but the staff does not feel as though there is a respect for the school/education or the teachers that there has been in the past. The school staff is very positive about how they come together to support each other and families. The staff often feels defeated when parents miss scheduled meetings or don't back up the teachers with their child. Staff stays positive for the most part.

6. *What are the advantages/disadvantages of your school setting regardless of family income?*

   As I stated before, my school is a family. Regardless of income if you are a part of it, you will always be in the family. This crosses all the lines of family income. Teachers also find ways to give new experiences, acquire new technology and work with all the families in order to

have their child get the best education they can. The disadvantages are teachers not feeling

valued by some of the parents. This is the only disadvantage I can think of.

7. *Describe other things that a teacher looks for in understanding and working with students in*

   a mixed race setting, particularly noting differences among children from low income/high

   poverty areas.

   Teachers look to make connections with students. They look for ways to make all

students feel they are a part of the school. They want them to have some buy in to their

education. They try to do this with the parents too. We try to make sure that we have a good

understanding of what background knowledge they have. We look to connect lessons to their

own personal experiences. We are always talking about trying to have our students share

information. This is across the board. There is no difference as to whether they are low income

or higher income.

4. First Grade Teacher at High Wealth School- In person interview

1. *What racial or ethnic groups are represented in your school?*

Black-6%, Indian-.2%, Asian-5.1%, Filipino-.2%, Hispanic/Latino-8.8%, White-73.5%, Multi-

10.5%

2. *Describe the extent and quality of the resources in your school including textbooks, materials*

   and technology.

   K-2:about 8 iPads in all classrooms, 3-4:about 10 Chrome Books in all classrooms,

Opting not to get new texts because of the changes with common core… In the process of buying

new phonics and guided reading… music once a week for a half hour… chorus once a week for a

half hour… art every other week for one hour… PE three days a week twice taught by outside

teachers once taught by classroom teachers… library once a week for thirty minutes… tech person can come to class and do a lesson based on need.

3. *Describe the average mathematics and language arts test scores/grades of the students in your classroom.*

      20 students… math and language arts-5 not meeting standards but close… 2 are ELL students and 3 go to additional booster groups 3 days a week and most likely will meet standards by the end of the year.

4. *Describe the differences, if any,*

a. *between the performance of boys and girls*

b. *between or among the performance of children from various socioeconomic levels*

c. *between or among children from different racial or ethnic backgrounds*

      Both boys and girls achieve high as well as low… 2 ELL students score lowest, parents cannot help at home because they don't speak English but it isn't a lack of them wanting to be educated.

5. *What is your perception of the view of your school a) by peers in the school district and b) by the public in general? Describe how these perceptions affect the overall attitude of your school staff and students.*

      They do well on testing and everybody wants in the district to go to that school. People are moving from other areas specifically to go to the school… Increase in over 300 students in 10 years… incredible staff wants to improve, demand puts pressure on staff. "They think we have the greatest staff so we have to be." The better and more positive the teachers are the better and more positive the kids are.

6. What are the advantages/disadvantages of your school setting regardless of family income?

Awesome place… facility with old nice classrooms… all the bells and whistles… still good mix of economics… parents volunteer… Over 1 million dollars were donated from families last year… allows students to go to the city, beach, museums, farmer's market. The weather is great. Disadvantage- outgrowing the campus… only way they can build is up so fourth grade may have to move to another campus.

7. Describe other things that a teacher looks for in understanding and working with students in a mixed race setting, particularly noting differences among children from low income/high poverty areas.

Low income parents do not bring the same amount of support. There are cultural differences and they believe that the teachers should do everything instead of the parents. The students face a language barrier especially on the playground. They are very accepting and like the character program established at the school.

Themes

The teachers all had good perceptions of their schools. They did not think less of their school because it was in a low wealth area. Staff members try their best. If parents do not reciprocate this effort, then the teachers lose motivation. Schools that fall just above the income level for Title I struggle because they do not have the income to back them up in the community. They also do not have the backing from the state through funding.

Summary

I found that those teachers at schools with low wealth families do not have the same resources as those as schools with high wealth families. The low wealth schools do not always

have the support of the parents and community. The support of the families is a big factor

because parents assist with donations and want to be invested in their children's education.

Teachers report that in low wealth schools do not have enrichment programs such as music, art

and so on.   Technology in low wealth schools is also limited, therefore contributing to the gap in

student performance.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

Discussion

The research is looking at the two questions, How does the socio-economic demographic of a school location affect their resource allocation and How does resource allocation affect students' academic success and student self-perceptions of success?

I found that there is a difference in resources based on the socio-economic demographic of the school. The location as well as the income of the parents supporting the school can impact what is funded and what is not. The low wealth schools only recently received Chrome Books that are specifically for testing, while the high wealth school has Chrome Books in all of the intermediate grades.

The low wealth schools also have worn books that have not been replaced in many years partially due to the high cost of adopting a new program. While the low wealth schools have some technology such as the ELMO cameras, they are not replaced quickly when broken. The high wealth school has more resources because the parents push for it. The high wealth and low wealth schools also had a difference in academic achievement between student populations. There were fewer students at the high wealth school who fell below standards as compared to the low wealth school. Additionally, while one teacher in the low wealth school found that race did not affect test scores in her class, the other teachers reported that race did have an impact on student performance. This may be explained in part by the impact of students from a variety of nationalities where parents do not view school as a priority. Parents may not understand English and cannot help their students at home. While both high and low wealth schools had good reputations, the high wealth school was viewed by the parents as desirable. Parents are

specifically moving towards the high wealth areas in an attempt to have their children attend the specific school. The low wealth school does not have the same draw as the high wealth school. However, teachers report that students still love their school. Community members remain supportive of the school.

The teachers interviewed noticed that the students who might be from families with limited income, do on average struggle more in class that those from higher income families. The teachers are only able to determine which students are from high wealth and low wealth based on who receives free lunch.

Limitations

Due to the time frame for the research study and access to teachers, results are limited. Limitations include the inability for the researcher to acquire test scores from a variety of schools as well as know the exact income of the population of the school.

Implications

Practical Implications

This research raises public awareness that all schools need equal funding. Teachers can use this information to understand the abilities of their students and the struggles they face based on their socioeconomic background. By having this information teachers will have realistic expectations of their students, understanding the effect of economic factors on student achievement.

Research Implications

Any future research should look at concrete numbers and questions that can be measurable. More research is needed to clearly define high wealth and low wealth.

Additionally, quantitative data would be helpful in comparing performance between and among schools.

Conclusions

Resource allocation is a problem across the United States that is affecting the students in schools of low wealth. The students in these schools do not receive the same opportunities as students in high wealth schools especially in relationship to technology. The low wealth schools are not able to upgrade their schools because there is no outside money from the parents to do so. It takes an entire community to run a successful school. The parents must be involved in both the financial aspect of their child's education as well as the knowledge side. It was found that while race is not a key factor in resource allocation, those who are of minority races tend to fall into the low wealth schools. Children at these schools, who choose not to be there, should still have an opportunity at the best education possible. It is important for teachers and administrators to realize that these are the schools that need attention and should not be dismissed because they do not have students with high test scores. With appropriate instructional materials and community support it is possible that many of the students at low wealth schools could demonstrate improved academic performance.

About the Author

Kimberly Harris has always had a passion for teaching after spending many years helping in her older brothers classrooms. She looks forward to teaching in an elementary school following graduation.

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