

Michelle yelencovich

[Education](#), [School](#)



Michelle Yelencovich EDU 601 Final Paper December 18, 2000 In this class, we have struggled to evaluate the current educational system in order to determine if significant social issues, including increasing regional poverty, and declining literacy rates in specific urban regions are related to economic differentiations in the education system. Because of recent studies, some have considered the issue of educational funding allotments in order to determine a system that provides greater equity between socioeconomically disadvantaged inner-city schools and wealthier suburban, middle class schools. This funding issue has been addressed a number of times. It has been recognized that the foundation for the necessary funding changes have stemmed from the recognition that school funding differences relate directly to sociological issues, including the creation of a cycle of poverty and illiteracy in under funded urban settings. One of the most significant issues raised in public education in recent years is the radical difference that exists in funding levels between wealth and poor school districts (Zuckman 749). Many states have allotted educational funding related to tax revenues, and this has determined a higher level of educational spending in wealthy neighborhoods and a much lower level of spending for inner-city poor and rural poor communities (Zuckman 749). Because of this focus, a number of states have considered and implemented plans for the equalization of school funding, but this has not come without considerable opposition (Zuckman 749). Though individuals in low-income neighborhoods areas have defined this equalization as a positive process for improving urban schools, wealthier suburban populations have complained that this will take away funding necessary to maintain programs that are already in place (Zuckman 749). In

class, we have argued that the differences in these educational settings have had a direct impact on the outcomes for students. Because a positive educational setting is a direct indicator of the capacity of a person to develop into a productive citizen, it has been determined that only with sufficient funding can public schools offer the educational process necessary to determine positive outcomes. Funding for elementary schools and public schools in general, is shifting from the federal level, to the state, county and city level, resulting in a need to consider the process by which funds are directed and integrated into public education. The complications with this shift in funding are defined as: " A fundamental trade-off between equity and efficiency objectives in the provision of public education [that] underlies the political tensions inherent in altering school funding responsibilities" (Duncombe and Johnston 145). Unfortunately, money determines political action in America, and politicians fight hard at both the local and national level for the increasingly scarce education dollars. Unfortunately, poverty seems to be breed societal problems, and the children and public schools of these poor districts need this education funding in order to break this cycle of poverty and societal problems. In order to understand the basic social issues that stem from this perspective, it is necessary to consider the foundations of education and the need for an integrated view of the social structure of schools to find a direction for change. According to Griffith (53), the most important relationships within the educational design are " relations among school structure, school population composition, parent involvement, and parent perceptions of school safety, school climate, the school facility, the helpfulness of school staff, the academic instruction,

teacher-student relationships, and student recognition" (53). As a result, the call for change requires acknowledgment of the basic perceptions of a variety of individuals in order to reflect the greatest complicity in implementing possible funding or educational changes. Political influences have struggled to find a means of providing equity and adequacy in their educational settings, a process that has determined the need for effective school funding formulas to reduce the level of inequity between low-income and wealthy school districts. Often in poor areas, schools do not get as much money per student as in areas that are more affluent because funding is based on the area's tax base. Simply put, because poor residents pay less in taxes because of their lower incomes, they get less in social services, including the social service that is public education. Socioeconomically disadvantaged students and those who come from school districts of lower income status populations, struggle for financial equity in the education. A number of schools allocate additional education funding based on taxpayer dollars by regions, additional financial support often encourages the discrepancies between school programs in relatively poor neighborhoods, towns or cities when compared to their wealthier counterparts. Kozol, in New York in the Bronx's school district 10, illustrates an example of inequality due to political influences. Kozol describes the Riverdale section of District 10 as white and upper middle class, whereas, other areas in this district are non-white and very poor. Kozol portrays many differences between these schools such as overcrowding, lack of textbooks, inadequate staff and crumbling buildings. He reports that these problems do not exist in the Riverdale section and comments on how the superintendent of District 10 is influenced

by the Riverdale section and comments on how the superintendent of District 10 is influenced by the Riverdale section. " Local board decided to give each elementary school an equal number of computers, even though the schools in Riverdale had smaller classes and far fewer students" (Kozol 84) Kozol makes it evident that politics plays an important role in how schools are funded and how money is not often spent equally between the suburban and urban schools. It also becomes apparent that poor children have little choice in the types of classes they attend and that their future is dependent upon government policies. It has been recognized that the quality of education and the level of interactive structure that encourages educational achievement is often linked to educational perspectives, and that limited educational dollars often sparks debate regarding the educational focus of the community. This is mentioned because a number of studies have suggested that improvements in student outcomes can often be improved through the application of instructional techniques based on technology and in optimizing the available resources to assist children in their educational process (Van Horn, 1997). But in educational settings limited by socioeconomic factors, the level of improvement is defined by the overall lack of educational dollars for increasing technology. Students regardless of socioeconomic factors can have the same potential at the beginning of their educational career, a number of researchers have challenged this perspective by evaluating the impact of socioeconomic factors, and educational spending on outcomes determinants, including standardized testing. Brooks-Gunn and Klebanov (1996) examined the differences in intelligence test scores for both black and white five year olds

and considered the implications of their family status, their health conditions, maternal activity, and the impacts of neighborhood as well as family poverty on the test outcomes. It was recognized that a number of factors directly related to socioeconomic conditions, including maternal education, the quality of the home environment, and family resources significantly affected the differential perceived between black and white children in IQ testing (Brooks-Gunn and Klebanov 396). Though the IQ score differentials suggested that black students scored lower than white students, adjustments that took into account socioeconomic conditions and maternal characteristics erased the gap in IQ scores, suggesting a clear connection between socioeconomic factors and differentials in standardized testing. These findings may not appear significant at first. It must be recognized that adjustments for socioeconomic differences in the lives of black and white students essentially eliminated any differences in IQ scores, underlining the fact that disadvantaged students could have the same outcomes in terms of educational testing if the impacts of socioeconomic conditioning could be reduced and also underscores the fact that socioeconomic impacts are not selective in terms of racial characteristics (Brooks-Gunn and Klebanov 397). In other words, whether black or white, students who come from low income families, with low levels of maternal education and who come from disadvantaged neighborhoods that do not receive adequate school funding have challenges that are not present for children in better socioeconomic situations. Because the best indicator of academic success was recognized to be the regularity of educational attendance, it can be argued that the positive educational environment, specifically an environment that is

adequately supported by necessary funding, is a key to supporting the larger social issues that occur when students do not attend or complete their education. I think that test scores could be bridged if schools aimed at increasing attendance, limiting student movement between schools in the same district. There is also a need to address the impact of socioeconomic factors (rather than simply race or poverty alone) in defining the issues related to reductions in student outcomes. Yet, another most prevalent factor in determining score outcomes for children of varying ethnicity is parental education. A number of studies have reflected on maternal education as a determinant of achievement, and especially among populations of disadvantaged students, the higher the educational level of the parents the more likely it is that these students will pursue learning, attend school, and test better in achievement tests (Entwisle and Alexander 446; Bankstron and Caldas 423). When compared with students whose parents were high school dropouts but of similar socioeconomic status, the link becomes even more apparent. Because socioeconomic status does not necessarily presuppose a lack of education, it is imperative to evaluate parental education outside of the criteria for socioeconomic divisions. In the secondary schools, if the educational environment not conducive to development and learning, students often drop out of school before they get their diploma. Without at least a high school diploma, a person has less hope and chance of finding a well-paying job, and virtually no chance for college. With the lack of employment and future educational prospects, a person without a high school diploma may turn to crime as a means of support, or may rely on the welfare system rather than seeking employment. This is the

cyclical presentation of a possible significant societal problems directly related to the lack of a good public school education. Researchers have recognized that parental education is a primary indicator of a student's attitude towards school and also impacts the capacity of the student to integrate what is learned, and assimilate learned information from the educational setting. In highly integrated urban low-income neighborhoods, with a high degree of cultural assimilation and familial ties, it is not uncommon for children to follow in their parents' " footsteps" and undereducated parents often produce children who are a challenge to educate; it can be implied, then, that children in low-income school districts and from disadvantaged backgrounds should receive a higher concentration of educational funding based on need. Citizens who have underprivileged schooling are funneled into jobs, which are poorly paid. In turn, the people not only have less knowledge, but also have less money and influence with which to change the system. Because they do not know how, nor have the tools to break the cycle of poverty, they continue to reproduce the class divisions and schooling that supports it. This in turn allows their children to be continually tracked into the lower skilled jobs. It can be argued that the high school student in this cycle may have dropped out anyway even if the secondary education offered met their needs. I believe more often than not, this would not be the case. All education is an investment, and secondary education is no exception. The atmosphere of the public secondary school is crucial to a successful learning environment. With productive citizens, the investment in public education has paid off in a full circle. Crime, among other societal problems, drains public funding that can be used in public

education. Quality public education producing conscientious citizens, as I have mentioned, can help cut down on crime and other societal problems. Legislatures should be concerned about adequate funding because this continues to be a challenge. The cycle of under funded schools, high dropout rates and continued cycles of poverty and welfare dependency tend to follow regional trends. This clearly defines a problem relative to the under funding of urban schools and the need to assess this problem in taking legislative action to change funding. There are two different areas of concern when considering the issues relative to poverty and the under funding of urban public schools. There is the issue of equality and the necessity for creating a base from which children can learn and maintain their focus on a promising education. Because of the funding systems that have been utilized for allocating educational money, wealthy suburban neighborhoods enjoy the benefits of technological improvements, better educational materials, and nicer facilities while children in of the urban poor are often provided with the essentials. I think the outcomes in disadvantaged educational settings are a direct result of the socioeconomic conditions and are directly correlated. Low test scores tend to be reflected as an outcome of low-income public education while higher standardized test scores are correlated to the increased educational focus and the impacts of programming and facility improvements that can be maintained within the educational settings of many higher income school districts. How can there be such a vast difference within the public school system of a country, which claims to provide equal opportunity for all? The equity issue boils down to the rights of students, and the right to a free, accessible, and equal public education for

all citizens is an essential directive in the American government. As a result, it is necessary to consider the social issue of under funded education and reflect upon both the causes and the cyclical nature of poverty as they relate to under funding of public schools.