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The Education Trust reports that nationally, the amount of money allocated to school districts with a large low-income-student (and minority) population is up to \$966 less per student than that given to more affluent school districts. A higher amount of money allocated to educational programs usually corresponds with higher achievement levels.

Schools that seek to improve programs after having provided the necessary books and reading aids, are still at a loss when they have little funding for employing specialists or equipping the labs with programs. Not all students respond to the same stimuli, and not all perform at the same rate. It is often necessary for schools to implement entirely new programs to accommodate students that have not been doing well in the older ones. These pioneering programs take money to get started and to keep going. Upon reviewing “Effects of the revenue cap on Wisconsin’s school districts” one of the most cited effects was an inability of schools to fund new programs.

Also cited was a reduction in staff, programs, and transportation. The implications of this are many and serious. Fewer members of staff means a larger ratio of students to staff. In such a situation, there is a greater risk of students’ needs not being noticed and therefore not being met. When classes are large, teachers do not get a chance to treat students individually, and this impairs a child’s ability to function optimally. Students who need only minimal help (and who happen to be bold) may speak up when they don’t understand.

Those who constantly need help, however, are likely to suffer the from larger class sizes that appear to derive from lower spending on education. The

reduction in transportation as a result of lower budgets can also be detrimental to the student. Tardiness and absenteeism are likely results of this problem, as several parents might be unable to make necessary arrangements to have the students at school on time. Some parents might just not have at their disposal the resources necessary for the trip. When the school cannot provide students with such help in accessing its resources, students cannot be expected to learn.

After school programs are beneficial to students because they are often exploited by a smaller percentage of the students. As a result, the teachers who run the programs are better able to recognise and target the areas in which the students need help most. It has been mentioned before that minorities in the United States, on average, have the lowest per capita funding for education. A lack of after-school programs can result directly from this, and it deprives students and teachers of the opportunity to work together individually and tackle students' problems.

After school programs may be academic or social, although research has shown that minority parents are on average more interested in the former aspect (Gewertz, 2004, p.). However, students may have problems in both areas. Minority students with little or no exposure to after school programs may experience impairments in their learning that might have easily been eradicated through a little time spent after school each day. Since student participation in these programs is voluntary, minority students who genuinely want to do better and may not otherwise have the chance are deprived of a place to seek the help many of them know that they need.

Studies have shown, too, that those who participate in after school programs are less likely to be late for or absent from school. In addition, programs usually improve students' effort level, their level of homework completion and give them a sense of belonging (Gayl, 2004).

Minority students have reported that though many are interested in such programs, they have had great difficulties in finding them (Gewertz, 2004. p. 2).

In addition, minorities are no strangers to the dangers of the streets, and research has shown that the hours between 3: 00 p. m. and 6: 00 p. m. are the times in which students are most likely to experiment with alcohol, sex, drugs, and cigarettes (Gayl, 2004). A lack of after school programs fails to provide the alternatives to these dangers, and also to the dangers of low academic achievement and illiteracy.

Parental involvement in students' education is critical to their development. Minority parents are often stereotyped as having little interest in their children's education; however, the evidence given above shows otherwise. What they do often face are such obstacles as the need to work overtime, and this prevents them from taking as active an interest in their children's academics as they would like. The result is that many minority students still struggle with their schoolwork, and literacy problems are generally high on their list of struggles. The U. S. Department of Education recognizes the critical aspect of early reading and print-rich environments. The Early Reading First program sets a goal " to provide preschool-age children with cognitive learning opportunities in high-quality language and literature-rich

environments so that the children can attain the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for optimal reading development in kindergarten and beyond.

However, many minority parents themselves suffer from impediments and gaps in their education, and as a result do not offer their children a home environment that is conducive to consistent and incidental learning. It is necessary that learning continue beyond the classroom, and that it begin before the child's school years do. Lack of parental involvement in education in the early years has devastating effects on students' ability to grasp literacy concepts and consequently to function in other content areas. A lack of parental involvement for minorities in school activities, such as parent-teacher conferences and even in supporting sports and club activities deprives students of an important motivating factor in school. In addition, when minority parents are not aware of students' progress in academics, they are unable to make adjustments that might get their children back on track. Close attention to student performance is critical, as early detection of problems makes it more likely that they will be fully corrected.

Minority parents who are not involved in school programs are likely to rear children that are more susceptible to the educational pitfalls that exist.

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