Educating Students in Poverty: Building Equity and Capacity with a Holistic Framework and Community School Model

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Abstract
Educators are often blamed for the achievement gap between low-income and higher income students. We propose to replace the divisive "blame game" with a holistic framework for collaborative action between schools, families, and communities. This 5H Holistic Framework (5HHF) is composed of the 5H protective factors (Health, Hands, Heart, Head, Home). These protective factors holistically address the educational needs and capacities of all students—especially students in poverty—for physical/mental health (Health), safety/security (Hands), social-emotional care (Heart), cognitive development (Head), and family/community support (Home). The 5HHF is used to identify and organize best educational practices and to recommend the community school model to reduce the income-based achievement gap and promote student well-being. The 5HHF of best practices and community school model expands the collective capacity of schools, families, and communities to meet equitably the educational needs of students in poverty and to enhance their opportunities for a quality education. Furthermore, we show how the 5HHF and community school model are aligned with and supported by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

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More than 50 years have passed since the inauguration of the congressional War on Poverty in the United States and yet the problem of poverty has currently grown to include over 50% of our national student population (Digest of Education Statistics, 2016; Suitts, 2015). Since the turn of the century, this inequity has intensified with the growth of low-income students far exceeding the growth of per-pupil expenditures (Suitts, 2016). Moreover, the level of child poverty in the United States is currently higher than most other countries with similar resources (OECD Family Database, 2016).

Although student poverty is heavily concentrated in the southern and far western states, it is also widespread in urban, suburban, and rural schools throughout the United States (Jiang, Granja, & Koball, 2017; National Center for Education Statistics, 2017; Suitts, 2015). Unfortunately, the challenge of educating students in poverty is associated with serious problems such as low academic achievement (Lacour & Tissington, 2011; Sirin, 2005), food insecurity and nutritional deficiencies (Bartfeld & Ahn, 2011; Share Our Strength, 2012), chronic health problems (Bloom, Cohen, & Freeman, 2012; Child Trends Databank, 2013b), unstable home environments (Miller, 2011; Mohan & Shields, 2014), and trauma and violence (Child Trends Databank, 2013a; Putnam, 2006). Furthermore, the problems of poverty are compounded by a widening national achievement gap, especially between low-income students and high-income students (DePaoli, Balfanz, Bridgeland, Atwell, & Ingram, 2017; Duncan & Murnane, 2014a; Reardon, 2011, 2013) and the growing isolation of low-income students in schools that have become dropout factories (Boschma & Brownstein, 2016; Reardon, Robinson-Cimpian, & Weathers, 2014).

In this thematic issue of the journal on helping students and schools in poverty, we call for a renewal of educators' commitment to the War on Poverty. Given low-income students are now the majority in our public schools, the challenge of educating students in poverty can no longer be considered a "side issue" for educators or the public. It needs to become "the central mission of American public schools and, by extension, a central responsibility of the American public" (Tough, 2016, p. 1).

However, the complex challenge of poverty can be overwhelming for educators who teach and provide daily support for students in poverty. Furthermore, educators are often blamed and scapegoated by the media, politicians, and the public for failing to close the achievement gap for students in poverty (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development [ASCD], 2015; Goldstein, 2014; Rose, 2015; Schneider, 2017). Conversely, educators are also guilty of playing the "blame game." They may blame students' low achievement on their lack of motivation and on parents' lack of school engagement, and, in turn, students and parents may blame teachers and administrators for rigid rules and unfair treatment. Ironically, the blame game has turned the War on Poverty into a misdirected and counterproductive war on and between teachers and students in poverty in which the helpers and victims are at risk of blaming each other and both are blamed by the media, politicians, and public for the educational problem of poverty (ASCD, 2015; Goldstein, 2014; Rose, 2015; Schneider, 2017). The game of blaming and complaining provides

convenient stereotypical excuses for low student achievement and ineffective teaching, but it is divisive and does not solve the problem.

Educators want to do what is best for students in poverty, but most schools lack a comprehensive plan to unite and guide them. In this editorial perspective, we propose for educators and the public to replace the blame game with a holistic framework for productive action. This holistic framework provides a comprehensive plan for school improvement that collaboratively unites students, schools, families, and communities. Educating students in poverty takes a whole village: Teachers, principals, counselors, social workers, families, and concerned community citizens need to work together collaboratively to address comprehensively the multiple needs of the whole child. The problems associated with poverty are too complex and consequential for any single group to address alone, and the divisive blame game only undermines our collective responsibility and capacity for progress.

In contrast to the unproductive blame game, the proposed holistic framework has educational implications for best school practices and school reform exemplified by community schools. Furthermore, this holistic framework expands the collective capacity of schools, families, and communities to meet equitably the basic needs of students in poverty, which are often neglected by traditional schools that focus mainly on academics. Also, this holistic framework is aligned with and supported by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (2015).

A HOLISTIC FRAMEWORK FOR EDUCATING STUDENTS IN POVERTY

During the 13-year implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (2002), it became apparent that educators were not going to close the achievement gap for the growing number of students in poverty by focusing solely on academics (Rothstein, 2004). However, a small number of high-performing, high-poverty schools were able to overcome the odds for short periods of time using a strong focus on academics and a no excuse approach (Jerald, 2001). Nevertheless, educators soon discovered that it was extremely difficult to replicate and scale up these narrowly focused educational reforms, especially for multiple academic subjects over extended periods of time (Harris, 2007; Kahlenberg, 2012–2013; Ladd, 2013). Most of these narrowly focused reforms have fallen short because they failed to address equitably the out-of-school obstacles of poverty and the unmet basic needs of students.

Poverty Is Not An Excuse But Is A Barrier

Educators are now realizing that poverty is not an excuse for low achievement but it is a real barrier to student learning (Duncan & Murnane, 2014b, 2014c; Ladd, 2012; Ladd, Noguera, Reville, & Starr, 2016; Rothstein, 2008). The multiple needs of students in poverty must be addressed holistically and equitably to counter and mitigate the complex barrier of out-of-school obstacles that affect in-school learning. Standalone school policies that attempt to satisfy narrowly the complex needs of students in poverty with an exclusive focus on academics and a no excuse approach are not likely to succeed (Harris, 2007; Kahlenberg, 2012–2013; Ladd, 2013; Rothstein, 2010).

With advances in social-emotional learning research (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Elias & Haynes, 2008; García & Weiss, 2016; Taylor, Oberle, Durlak, & Weissberg, 2017), we are currently undergoing a second wave of educational reform, which in addition to the academic needs of students, also addresses their social and emotional needs (Barr & Gibson, 2013; Gibson & Barr, 2015). Building on the second wave of reform and going beyond it, we propose a third wave of reform using a holistic framework that comprehensively and equitably addresses the complex needs and capacities of students in poverty.

The third wave of reform is closely aligned with the educational recommendations of the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (2012) Whole Child Approach. The ASCD Whole School Approach shifts the educational focus from narrowly defined academic achievement to the long-term development and success of the whole child. Whole child tenets include ensuring that the development of each child is healthy, safe, engaged and challenged by personalized learning, supported by qualified, caring adults, connected to the school and broader community, and prepared for postsecondary success and employment. The Whole School Approach promotes collaboration between educators, families, community members, and policymakers. Consistent with the Whole Child Approach, the proposed holistic framework shifts the focus from narrowly defined achievement to long-term development and success of the whole child and promotes the collaboration of all stakeholders in the development of the child.

Also contributing to the third wave of reform, the Broader Bolder Approach (BBA) has been widely endorsed by well-recognized educators (Broader, Bolder Approach, 2016; Noguera, 2011; Noguera & Wells, 2011). BBA expands the traditional concept of education in three ways to meet equitably the needs of all students, especially students in poverty. First, it recommends expanding student-learning time to include early childhood and preschool programs, afterschool, and summer school programs. Second, it recommends expanding student development to include not only academic skills and cognitive development but also the development of the whole child, including physical and mental health, social and emotional skills, and other non-cognitive skills. Third, it recommends expanding school services to include accessible physical and mental health services and partnerships with community institutions and organizations such as universities, churches, and recreation

centers. Consistent with BBA, the proposed holistic framework expands the traditional concept of education to include extended student learning time and opportunities, the holistic development of the whole child, and the collaboration of schools, families, and communities.

The 5H Holistic Framework

The proposed 5H Holistic Framework (5HHF) consists of five protective factors (Head, Heart, Hands, Health, Home) (Rea & Zinskie, 2015). These factors comprehensively address the educational needs of all students for physical/mental health (Health), safety/security (Hands), social-emotional care (Heart), cognitive development (Head), and family/community support (Home). Based on a case study examination of past presentations at the National Youth-At-Risk Conference, the 5HHF was developed by a thematic analysis of the most common ways that diverse practitioners from different fields reported successfully educating youth placed at risk. Hence, the framework is practitioner-oriented for school staff, parents, and community youth-service providers and ecologically valid within the multiple contexts of the home, neighborhood, and school. Currently, the 5HHF is used to define the five thematic strands of the National Youth-At-Risk Conference. Conceptually, this framework is consistent with holistic, ecological, and dynamic systems theories that view human learning and development as complex dynamic interactive processes taking place within multiple contexts (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2002; Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, & Lozano, 2002; Miller, 2007; Rose, 2016).

Educators may collaboratively use the 5HHF to address comprehensively and equitably the multiple needs and capacities of all students. The 5HHF is especially relevant for students in poverty because their needs and capacities are often not met or fully developed in traditional

schools that focus predominantly and narrowly on academics. Furthermore, educators can use the 5HHF as a practical classification tool to guide the comprehensive identification, organization, and application of best practices for educating students in poverty.

Each of the five protective factors supports student learning but, more importantly, they work together collectively and equitably to safeguard and promote the overall well-being of students. They overlap and synergistically interact to develop holistically the multiple capacities of the whole child. Separately, the 5H protective factors are incomplete to address the complex barrier of poverty and inadequate to meet and develop the multiple needs and capacities of the whole child.

On the one hand, the 5Hs can be used by educators as protective factors for meeting and developing the multiple needs and capacities of students in poverty. On the other hand, the 5Hs can also be used to identify risk factors when neglected or hindered. Hence, the 5HHF may be used both to diagnose risks and propose solutions for educating students in poverty.

The following description of the 5HHF is not a finished product; it is a provisional work in progress subject to ongoing revision and additional research. This framework is designed to provide a practical conceptual guide for identifying and addressing the complex needs and capacities of students in poverty. The best practices corresponding with each protective factor are illustrative and suggestive of how educators may collaboratively use the holistic framework to develop equitably the capacities of students in poverty. Furthermore, we provide a brief description of how the holistic framework aligns with and can be supported by ESSA.

"Head" protective factor. The first protective factor, "Head," promotes the intellectual capacities and talents of students. This factor protects students in poverty who may be placed at risk—for diminished school learning and low-academic achievement—when schools have unqualified or inexperienced teachers, low teacher expectations, overcrowded classrooms, narrow curriculum, unaligned curriculum, lack of rigorous and relevant curriculum, passive instructional strategies, disregard for individual learning differences, lack of collaborative leadership, lack of assessment for instructional improvement, and lack of early and extended learning times.

Alternatively, some best educational practices and appropriate programs for protecting against these risks and promoting student learning include the following (these practices are adapted from and supported by the American Psychological Association (2015) and other sources at the bottom of this section):

- *School size*—schools, school units, and classrooms are relatively small in student-to-teacher ratios;

- *School leadership*—school leadership is based on a clear shared mission, collaborative professional learning communities, and the instructional leadership of a dedicated principal;

- *Teacher attributes*—teachers are qualified (e.g., certified and in-field), experienced, and provide high expectations and support of students;

- *Instructional features*—instruction is culturally responsive, student centered, developmentally appropriate, further developed by one-on-one tutoring, enhanced by using timely informative feedback, improved by using student assessment as a feedback tool, and deepened by quality professional development (e.g., focused on content knowledge and instructional practices; aligned with school improvement efforts, and supported by coaching);

- *Curriculum characteristics*—the curriculum is well rounded, rigorous and relevant, and vertically aligned (e.g., across grade and school levels, especially elementary to middle school, middle school to high

school, and high school to postsecondary education);

- *Learning time opportunities*—students have early and extended learning time opportunities (e.g., early childhood, preschool, afterschool program, weekend, and summer school programs);
- *Learning strategies*—student learning is personalized, differentiated, competency/ mastery-based, active (e.g., movement- and arts-based), authentic (e.g., real-world problems and projects), higher ordered (e.g., creative and critical thinking), self-regulated, and based on varied groupings (e.g., individualized, cooperative, and competitive);
- *Learning resources*—students have adequate supplies and resources for enhanced learning (e.g., books, computers, software, Internet connection, media center, and well-maintained school facilities);
- *Advanced courses*—all students have equitable access to talented and gifted classes, advanced placement, honors, and dual-enrollment courses; and
- *Postsecondary preparation*—students are prepared for postsecondary education and employment with effective readiness programs (e.g., Upward Bound, Talent Search, GEAR UP, and AVID) (Bjorklund, 2012; Cardichon & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Chenoweth, 2016; Cornelius-White & Harbaugh, 2010; Duncan, Magnuson, & Murnane, 2016; Duncan & Murnane, 2014b, 2014c; Dunst, Bruder, & Hamby, 2015; Gay, 2010; Gorski, 2013a, 2013b; Jensen, 2013, 2016; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; McCombs & Miller, 2007; Mullainathan & Shafir, 2014; Parrett & Budge, 2012; Redd et al., 2012; Schanzenbach, 2014; Tomlinson, 2017; Weimar, 2013).

Contrary to the best practices of the "Head" protective factor, NCLB focused rigidly and uniformly on teacher-directed, seat-time learning and high-stakes, end-of-the-year assessments. These practices tended to encourage teaching to the test and a narrowing of the curriculum, which often resulted in superficial student learning (Au, 2007; David, 2011). ESSA shifts the focus to a personalized, competency-based approach to learning and assessment, which is flexible and student-centered (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2016; Murphy, Redding, & Twyman, 2016; Pane, Steiner, Baird, & Hamilton, 2015; Stevens, n.d.). This student-centered approach is enhanced by blended learning, which uses both technology-based and face-to-face instruction. It can help close the achievement gap for students in poverty by customizing their learning and allowing them some control over the pace, time, place, and path of the learning process. Also, it expands assessment options to include computer-adaptive, portfolios, projects, and extended performance-task assessments to encourage students to think critically and solve complex real-world problems and to allow multiple points of assessment as opposed to a single end-of-year assessment.

NCLB also focused narrowly and unrealistically on academic achievement, especially reading and mathematics achievement, and hence, made little progress in closing the achievement gap for students in poverty. However, consistent with the protective factor of the "Head," ESSA broadens academic achievement to emphasize a well-rounded education (Jones & Workman, 2016). A well-rounded education has important implications for improving the school success of all students, especially students whose diverse interests and learning needs may not be met by core academic subjects solely. However, these students may thrive and benefit from well-rounded educational courses and programs that include career and technical education, computer science, music, art, health, and physical education.

"Heart" protective factor. The second protective factor, "Heart," promotes students' social and emotional capacities and the

school climate. This factor protects students in poverty who may be placed at risk—for social and emotional issues of estrangement, defensiveness, and apathy—when school staff exhibit biased expectations of students, intolerance of diversity, uncaring and distrusting relationships with students, fixed views of student ability, authoritarian, permissive, or indifferent leadership styles, and unsupportive school and classroom climates.

Alternatively, some best educational practices for protecting against these risks and promoting students' social and emotional skills include school staff (these practices are adapted from and supported by the Core SEL Competencies (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2017) and other sources at the bottom of this section):

- *Unbiased expectations*—exhibit unbiased expectations of students;
- *Trusting relationships*—establish caring and trusting relationships with students;
- *Resilience development*—build student resilience;
- *Self-esteem enhancement*—foster student self-esteem/self-concept;
- *Diversity appreciation*—model and teach appreciation and understanding of diversity;
- *Emotion management*—model and promote self-awareness and self-management of emotions;
- *Relationship skills*—encourage social awareness and relationship skills;
- *Communication skills*—model and teach effective communication skills (e.g., listening carefully, reading nonverbal cues, and seeking clarification);
- *Decision-making skills*—teach responsible decision-making skills;
- *Growth mindset*—promote a growth view of student ability;
- *Internal motivation*—enhance students' internal motivation (e.g., self-efficacy, locus

of control, intrinsic motivation, and mastery goals);

- *Leadership styles*—use authoritative and democratic leadership styles; and
- *Supportive school climate*—foster a caring supportive school climate (Alderman, 2008; American Psychological Association, 2015; Anderman & Anderman, 2014; Barr & Gibson, 2013; Benard, 2004; Cardichon & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Chenoweth, 2016; Claro, Paunesku, & Dweck, 2016; Dweck, 2006; Elias & Haynes, 2008; Fantuzzo et al., 2007; García & Weiss, 2016; Jensen, 2016; Jia, Konold, & Cornell, 2016; Jones, Bouffard, & Weissboard, 2013; McCombs & Miller, 2007; Taylor et al., 2017; Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013; Tough, 2016; Williams, Greenleaf, Albert, & Barnes, 2014).

ESSA proposes non-cognitive indicators that include aspects of the second protective factor such as accounting for social and emotional skills and a caring school climate (Darling-Hammond et al., 2016; Martin, 2017; Schneider, Jacobsen, White, & Gehlback, 2017; West, 2016). Under ESSA, school districts will now have the flexibility and opportunity to take advantage of promoting a caring school climate and students' social and emotional learning capacities. When the intellectual capacities of the "Head" are combined with the social and emotional capacities of the "Heart," students in poverty are more likely to become motivated and engaged in meaningful learning.

"Hands" protective factor. The third protective factor, "Hands," promotes student safety, security, and violence prevention. This factor protects students in poverty who may be placed at risk—for low achievement, poor attendance, disorderly classrooms, unfair discipline policies, bullying, gang violence, and school shootings—when there are unfair discipline policies (e.g., rigid zero tolerance; disproportionate suspensions and expulsions for minorities; unsafe school climate; authoritarian,

permissive, or indifferent discipline styles; and lack of bullying prevention.

Alternatively, some best educational practices protecting against these risks and promoting student emotional and physical security/safety include school staff (these practices are adapted from and supported by the American Psychological Association (2015) and other sources listed at the bottom of this section):

- *Equitable discipline*—set equitable and culturally responsive management policies;

- *Preventive discipline*—implement preventive discipline such as nurturing relationships with students and using tiered supports to promote positive behavior;

- *Instructional approach*—adopt an instructional approach to school discipline;

- *Clear expectations and consequences*—establish clear, reasonable, and consistent expectations and consequences, especially during the first two weeks of school;

- *Differential reinforcement*—model and reinforce appropriate behavior and ignore minor misbehavior (i.e., catch students being good);

- *Restorative justice*—apply restorative justice in which involved parties decide how to repair harm after an infraction;

- *Effective interventions*—use timely and on-target interventions;

- *Authoritative corrections*—employ authoritative approaches to correcting misbehavior, which provide a reason for the correction of misbehavior;

- *Self-discipline*—model and teach self-regulation of behavior and conflict resolution skills;

- *Minimize classroom removal*—use removal from the classroom as a last resort and return to class as soon as possible;

- *In-school suspension*—establish in-school suspension with academic instruction;

- *Bullying prevention*—institute bullying prevention; and

- *Safe school climate*—foster a safe orderly school climate (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2013; American Psychological Association, 2008; Ansary, Elias, Greene, & Green, 2015; Bear, 2010a, 2010b; Bear, Yang, Mantz, & Harris, 2017; Cardichon & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Gregory, Clawson, Davis, & Gerewitz, 2015; Gregory & Cornell, 2009; Gregory, Cornell, & Fan, 2011, 2012; Gregory et al., 2010; Jain, Buka, Subramanian, & Molnar, 2012; Klein, Cornell, & Konold, 2012; Milner & Tenore, 2010; Rothstein-Fisch & Trumball, 2008; Skiba & Peterson, 2003; Teasley, 2014; Thapa et al., 2013; U.S. Department of Education, 2014; Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2004).

ESSA's non-cognitive indicators also account for aspects of the third protective factor such as creating a safe school climate and preventing bullying (Darling-Hammond et al., 2016; Dignity in Schools, n.d.; National Association of School Psychologists, n.d.). In accordance with ESSA, school districts will now have the flexibility and opportunity to take advantage of promoting the capacity of schools to provide safe spaces for student learning. When the social and emotional capacities of the "Heart" are combined with the protective safety of the "Hands," students in poverty are more likely to want to attend and learn in schools where they feel safe and accepted.

"Health" protective factor. The fourth protective factor, "Health," promotes students' physical and mental health. First, this factor protects students in poverty who may be placed at risk—for physical health problems such as food insecurity, eating disorders, obesity, type 2 diabetes, asthma, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and teenage pregnancy—when there is a shortage of food, lack of proper nutrition, lack of exercise, lack of adult supervision, stress and depression, and low self-esteem.

Alternatively, some best educational practices and appropriate programs for protecting against these risks and promoting student physical health include (these practices are adapted from and supported by the CDC (2011) and other sources at the bottom of this section):

- *Healthy school climate*—support healthy eating and physical activity and avoid weight-based teasing and stigmatizing healthy activities;

- *School meals/beverages*—provide nutritional and appealing school meals available to all students and ensure beverages and foods outside of school meals are also healthy and appealing;

- *Physical education program*—implement a comprehensive daily physical education program for K–12 students;

- *Health education program*—implement a health education program for K–12 students to promote lifelong healthy eating and physical activity;

- *In-school services*—provide students with in-school health services to address healthy eating, physical activity, and related chronic disease prevention (e.g., diabetes, asthma, obesity, anorexia, and bulimia);

- *Community services*—ensure students and families have access to community medical health services;

- *Community and family partnerships*—educate and engage families and community members in healthy eating and physical activity practices and programs;

- *Employee wellness program*—provide a school employee program for all school staff; and

- *Qualified heath educators*—require the hiring of certified and in-field physical education teachers, health education teachers, and nutrition services staff (Bartfeld & Ahn, 2011; Basch, 2011; Duffee, Kuo, & Gitterman,

2016; Lee & Stewart, 2013; National Health Education Standards, 2016; SHAPE America, 2015).

Second, this factor also protects students in poverty who may be placed at risk—for mental health problems such as stress, trauma, depression, eating disorders, substance abuse, addictions, mental disorders, emotional problems, behavioral problems, and suicide—when there is a lack of intervention, prevention, and treatment programs, lack of counseling support, and lack of connectedness to school. Alternatively, some best educational practices and appropriate programs for protecting and promoting student mental health include (these practices are adapted from and supported by the American School Counselor Association (2015) and the other sources at the bottom of this section):

- *Awareness raising*—raise student awareness about the importance of mental health;

- *Stigma removal*—remove the stigma of mental health issues;

- *Warning-signs recognition*—recognize possible warning signs of mental health problems (e.g., mood changes, changes in grades or attendance, and increased disciplinary problems);

- *In-school treatment*—provide school-based counseling, prevention, and crisis intervention for mental health needs (e.g., stress, trauma, emotional problems, addictions, and depression);

- *Staff and parent education*—educate school staff and parents about mental health concerns of students;

- *Trauma-informed practices*—implement trauma-informed school practices;

- *Suicide prevention*—establish suicide prevention programs; and

- *Community treatment*—ensure students and families have access to community mental health services (American School

Counselor Association, 2015; Bartlett, Smith, & Bringewatt, 2017; Basch, 2011; CDC, 2009; Duffee et al., 2016; Williams et al., 2014).

Consistent with the "Health" protective factor, ESSA provides school improvement funding to support healthy school environments (Healthy Schools Campaign, 2016; Mann & Mays, 2016). Some eligible activities include supporting schools in integrating health practices into their programs, implementing mental health awareness training programs for school staff, and expanding access to school-based mental health community partnerships. Health education and physical education are also included in ESSA's new emphasis on a well-rounded education. Furthermore, schools may use chronic absenteeism, which is often related to student health problems, as a non-cognitive indicator of school quality. Given that students in poverty are disproportionately affected by health problems, the improvement of school health programs and practices will likely improve their attendance and success.

"Home" protective factor. The fifth protective factor, "Home," promotes family and community engagement in support of students and schools. First, this factor protects students in poverty who may be placed at risk for family disengagement when their families lack transportation, formal education, and English-speaking skills, or they are single, over worked, homeless, abusive or neglectful, incarcerated, mistrusting of educators, and discouraged by an unwelcoming school.

Alternatively, some best educational practices for promoting family engagement include (these practices are adapted from and supported by the PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships (PTA, 2014) and other sources at the bottom of this section):

- *Family assessment*—assess needs and strengths of school families;
- *Welcoming schools*—create welcoming schools for community members;

- *Two-way communication*—foster two-way communication between schools and homes;
- *Family engagement*—involve families in school planning, governance, and volunteer opportunities;
- *Community resources*—connect families to community resources to aid their children's education; and
- *Family knowledge*—enhance and build on the knowledge and skills of families to support their children's education (Benard, 2004; "Best Practices in Engaging Diverse Families," 2016; Epstein et al., 2009; PTA, 2014; Redding, Murphy, & Sheley, 2011; Weisleder et al., 2016; Westmoreland, Rosenberg, Lopez, & Weiss, 2009; Williams et al., 2014).

Second, this factor also protects students in poverty who may be placed at risk for community disengagement when their communities are threatened by gangs and drugs and lack positive adult role models and supportive community resources. Alternatively, some best educational practices for promoting community engagement include (these practices are adapted from and supported by Reform Support Network (2014) and sources listed at the bottom of this section):

- *Community assessment*—assess needs and assets of the community;
- *Welcoming schools*—create welcoming schools for community members;
- *Two-way communication*—facilitate two-way communication between schools and communities;
- *Community partnerships*—offer opportunities for community service to and partnership with schools; mobilizing cross-sector community resources (e.g., dental, medical, mental health services);
- *Community mentors*—enlist the help of community mentors for students; and

- *Community advocates*—encourage community supporters to become school leaders and advocates (Benard, 2004; Coalition for Community Schools, n.d.; Epstein et al., 2009; Oakes, Maier, & Daniel, 2017; Redding et al., 2011; Walsh, Gish, Foley, Theodorakakis, & Rene, 2016; Williams et al., 2014).

Consistent with the protective factor of the "Home," ESSA calls for families to be engaged in helping school staff develop school district education plans (Henderson, 2015). These plans describe how a school district will deliver education services to students and how parents will be engaged in school activities such as parent advisory boards. Also, parents must be engaged in the creation of "state report cards" that provide information about the performance of all schools in the state, such as attendance, student achievement levels, and graduation rates. Report cards need to be written in parent-friendly language, so families can understand them and take action to support their child's education. Title I school districts also need to include a written family engagement policy in their education plan that welcomes all families and strengthens the partnership between families, the school, and the community to improve student outcomes. The written policy requires each school to have an annual meeting with families to explain student learning objectives, assessments, academic standards, and proficiency levels. The policy also requires: reasonable parent access to school staff, opportunities to volunteer in their child's class and/or observe classroom activities, and regular two-way meaningful communication between the family and school staff. Furthermore, funding is available to schools that consult and collaborate with community organizations or businesses with a record of effective family engagement in the community.

ESSA emphasizes not only family engagement but also community engagement for school improvement and student success (Adelman & Taylor, 2016). ESSA goes beyond NCLB to allow federal funding for community engagement approaches such as the Integrated Student Supports (ISS). According to Moore et al. (2014), ISS is an evidence-based approach to community engagement that provides wraparound community services to support the success and healthy development of low-income students and their families (e.g., dental, medical, mental health services, etc.). ESSA also provides funding for the Promise Neighborhoods initiative, which is a resource for the implementation of a continuum of coordinated community services to help restore distressed neighborhoods (e.g., social, health, nutrition, and mental health services). Furthermore, ESSA provides funding for community schools serving low-income students and communities. Community schools provide comprehensive services such as ISS and expanded learning times, which are explained more fully in the next section.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS FOR EDUCATING STUDENTS IN POVERTY

The 5HHF has educational implications not only for comprehensively identifying and organizing the best school practices of each protective factor, but also for integrating the best practices into a comprehensive school model. Community schools provide an operational model of how the best practices of the five protective factors can work together to serve the educational needs of students in poverty and reduce the income-based achievement gap. According to The Coalition of Community Schools (n.d.), "A community school is both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. Its integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community engagement leads to improved student learning, and stronger families and healthier communities" (para. 1).

The community school—serving as the hub of the community—expands the traditional

concept of the school to include families and the community collaborating in partnership with the school to mitigate out-of-school barriers to in-school learning (Benson, Harkavy, Johanek, & Puckett, 2009; Dryfoos, 2008). They can be any type of school including public, charter, magnet, parochial, or private but most are public schools. Also, they have been successfully implemented in urban, suburban, and rural areas across the United States but most are in urban areas (Williams, 2010). Internationally, community schools have been implemented in Europe (e.g., Scotland, Sweden, England, and the Netherlands). In the United States, the Harlem Children's Zone Charter Schools in New York City are among the best-known, large-scale examples of community schools (Dobbie & Fryer, 2011). Studies indicate cost-effective positive returns on community school investments of 10 to 15 dollars for every invested dollar (Oakes et al., 2017). Positive returns come from improvements in education, health outcomes, employment, and reductions in crime and welfare.

Most community schools share four common educational features: integrated student supports, expanded learning time and opportunities, family and community engagement, and collaborative leadership and practices. These common school features are delineated and briefly described as follows (Oakes et al., 2017):

1. *Integrated student supports* (ISS). Community partnerships with physical health agencies, mental health agencies, dental offices, and social service agencies for various needs such as health, housing, food, clothing, and safety are used to address out-of-school barriers to learning. A dedicated professional staff member typically coordinates these wraparound community services. These community services support the basic needs of students and their families and contribute to a stable home environment for student learning and well-being.

Community schools often draw on the assistance of national organizations such as The Children's Aid Society (n.d.), City Connects (2016), or Communities in Schools (n.d.) to help locate and coordinate community services customized for students and their families. These organizations help to mobilize and facilitate cross-sector collaboration to deliver integrated services for the school. Integrated student supports are primarily aligned with the following protective factors of the holistic framework: Health, Hands, and Home.

2. *Expanded learning time and opportunities.* The traditional school day is expanded to include learning opportunities before, during, and after school, on the weekend, and during the summer. These learning opportunities offer supplemental instruction, enrichment activities, personalized academic support, and authentic learning activities in the community. The expanded learning time may be used to promote academic and non-academic goals for students. Expanded learning time is primarily aligned with the following protective factors of the holistic framework: Head and Heart.

3. *Family and community engagement.* Families and the community become partners with the community school in educating students. The school becomes a neighborhood hub that provides adults with educational supports and opportunities such as parenting skills, GED classes, English Language Learning (ELL) classes, finance skills, and computer skills. Parents may also be trained to volunteer as classroom tutors or community school resource staff. Family and community engagement is primarily aligned with the following protective factor of the holistic framework: Home.

4. *Collaborative leadership and practices.* The community school uses collaborative leadership to build collective trust, shared responsibility, and a culture of professional

learning. Site-based leadership and governance teams involving all stakeholders are used to make school decisions. Teachers are encouraged to work in professional learning communities. Collaborative leadership is primarily aligned with the following protective factors of the holistic framework: Head and Home.

Individually and collectively these four features of community schools meet the criteria of ESSA for evidence-based research for school improvement (Heers, Klaveren, Groot, & van den Brink, 2016; Moore et al., 2014; Oakes et al., 2017; Walsh et al., 2014). Also, the community school model has been effective in turning around failing schools and reducing the income-based achievement gap (Dobbie & Fryer, 2011, 2015; Heers et al., 2016; Oakes et al., 2017; Walsh et al., 2014). Furthermore, community schools are associated with improved student attendance, increased student graduation rates, decreased student risky behaviors, increased family engagement, improved student and family health, and positive student and family attitudes toward school, which coupled with increased student achievement tend to foster the overall well-being of students and families in poverty (Heers et al., 2016; Oakes et al., 2017).

In general, the strength of the results for community schools depends on the fidelity (each feature reliably applied), length (three to four years), comprehensiveness (all four features), and collaborative nature (involving school, community, and families) of the implementation process (Oakes et al., 2017). Also, the strength of the results will most likely be enhanced by applying the respective best practices of the holistic framework to each of the community school features. For instance, the quality of learning resulting from the feature of expanding learning time and opportunities will likely depend on whether the best practices of learning have been applied. If the best practices of learning have not been applied, then merely expanding learning time and opportunities will not likely produce the best results for quality learning.

Currently, ESSA offers more programmatic funding to support community schools than NCLB did. Community school supportive programs include: ESSA-authorized Full-Service Community Schools, Promise Neighborhoods, and 21st Century Community Learning Centers (Adelman & Taylor, 2016; Federal Funding, n.d.). Also, Title I of ESSA can be used to support various components of community schools (Title I Funding for Community Schools, n.d.). Ongoing funds for these programs are subject to congressional approval.

PREVIEW OF ISSUE CONTENT

Contributors to this themed issue address issues of hidden or unconscious bias regarding poverty, low expectations for students living in poverty, and lack of understanding of the negative effects of poverty on students and their families. However, these authors also provide tools and recommendations designed to help educators be more empathetic and responsive when educating students living in poverty. Issue content promotes a more holistic focus on education that goes beyond academics to address other areas such as social-emotional development and physical and mental health needs.

Dan Rea's interview with Eric Jensen addresses recommendations for educators to help students and schools in poverty. Jensen discusses important concerns about teaching students in poverty and how impoverished mindsets must be replaced by enriching mindsets to reach these students and cultivate their talents. These mindsets for change address how to enrich classroom relationships, student achievement, student engagement, and school climate for student success.

Emily Gibson and Robert Barr address educators' implicit biases and prejudices about people living in poverty. They provide guidance

to schools on building a Culture of Hope, a plan for helping youth at risk find success in and out of school. The authors ask educators to consider their own beliefs with regard to poverty and offer strategies on how to better meet the social-emotional needs of students living in poverty.

Richard Milner, Heather Cunningham, Ira Murray, and Adam Alvarez also describe the need for educators to be more poverty-responsive to their students living below the poverty line. The authors describe the challenges these students face outside of school; they also provide recommendations for educators: reflect on own beliefs about poverty, pursue school-community partnerships, and adjust teaching, as needed, to facilitate students' academic success.

Anindya Kundu presents his study on using grit and agency as a framework for helping students in poverty overcome obstacles to achieve academic and professional success. Analysis of the data from this qualitative study reveals three themes: mental health, networking, and goal formation. The author concludes that educators can help students in poverty meet their academic goals and increase their social mobility by increasing focus on agency and grit within a supportive social structure.

Rajni Shankar-Brown shares the results of a qualitative case study of homeless students residing in a family emergency housing shelter. Her results show that these students possess deep educational estrangement, which in turn negatively influences their social-emotional development. The author urges that educators receive adequate preparation for meeting the academic and social needs of students living in poverty and experiencing homelessness.

Lisa Skeens contributes an overview of guided imagery, which is an intervention strategy that can benefit children who are at risk for social, academic, physical, and mental health problems. She reviews literature on the mental health needs of children in vulnerable situations such as poverty and homelessness. The author recommends guided imagery as a cost-effective mental health strategy for the educational empowerment of students and clients by schools and community agencies.

Aviva Goelman Rice, Linda Ann McCall, and Jacquelyn Ogden describe how one school district has been successful in increasing teacher sensitivity to students living in poverty through use of a poverty simulation. Their article includes information on the effects of poverty on child development and the efficacy of simulation learning; in addition, the authors present findings from surveys administered before and after the poverty simulations.

Gregory Johnston reviews the book, *The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates,* authored by Wes Moore in 2011. The book describes how two different men from Baltimore with the same name met similar challenges in different ways resulting in two very life paths. The author of the review shares three major themes from the book—poverty, education, and resiliency—that directly relate to work with youth at risk.

George E. Miller II, a child advocacy artist based out of northeast Florida, shares his artwork—"Our Children, Our World, Our Future"—in this issue. This contribution illustrates children looking ahead to the future with hope. Miller wants his work to inspire both educators and students so that these children can create a bright future for themselves and their communities.

CONCLUSION

We have reached a tipping point in the United States with more than 50% of our students now living in poverty. According to Suitts, author of *A New Majority Research Bulletin*, "We've reached the juncture in our public schools where the education of low-income students is not simply a matter of equity and fairness. It's a matter of our national future, because when one group becomes the majority of our

students, they define what that future is going to be in education more than any other group" (ASCD, 2015, p. 5). The demographic majority of students in poverty may propel educators into an uncertain future, but it does not necessarily determine our destiny.

Fostering the opportunities of all students for a quality education needs to be the central mission and destiny of our schools. However, to improve our schools, we must stop blaming students, parents, teachers, administrators, and policymakers for the problems and equip them with a strategic plan to solve the problems. The 5HHF replaces the unproductive blame game with a comprehensive plan for effective collaboration and cross-sector mobilization of resources. This holistic framework expands the educational capacity of schools, families, and communities to meet equitably the basic needs of students in poverty, which are often neglected by traditional schools that focus mainly on academics. Furthermore, it has educational implications for best school practices associated with the five protective factors and school reform exemplified by the community school model. Also, this holistic framework is aligned with and supported by ESSA.

Educators need not be committed to the comprehensive implementation of the community school model to derive educational benefits from the 5HHF. They may use the holistic framework as a diagnostic tool to determine areas of strength and needed enhancement. Based on an inspection of the framework, school staff may identify which of the five protective factors are their areas of strength and which need further enhancement. For identified factors that need further enhancement, they can examine the recommended best practices and select a few practices for implementation that appear most relevant to their situational needs and school goals. School staff, individually or collectively, may implement a selected practice to enhance some aspect of a protective factor such as intrinsic motivation of the "Heart"

factor. A math teacher may want to intrinsically motivate students who are unmotivated to learn math. Drawing on the literature about intrinsic motivation, the teacher may design intrinsic motivation math activities that allow student choice. Using practitioner research (also called action research), the teacher can implement math activities involving student choice and observe how well they work with the students and then reflect on adjustments needed to enhance further the practice of intrinsic motivation for the "Heart" factor (for more information about using practitioner research, see Zinskie & Rea, 2016).

As stated previously, the 5HHF is not a finished product; it is a provisional work in progress subject to ongoing revision and additional research. The first step in developing further the framework would be to assemble five teams of distinguished educators with expertise and experience in the respective areas of the five protective factors and for them to review, revise, and further develop the specific risks and best practices corresponding to each of the 5H factors. This development would include briefly explaining each of the best practices and describing examples of how to apply them. A second step for these educators would be to confirm that each of the best practices is an evidenced-based intervention as defined by ESSA. A third step for these educators would be to gather and describe additional information about how ESSA and other funding sources can be used to support the implementation of the holistic framework of best practices and the community school model.

The 5HHF with best practices and community schools is not the final or only answer to the challenge of educating students in poverty. Nonetheless, it offers a comprehensive framework to guide our collective action as we strategically wage the War on Poverty. It expands the collective capacity of educators, parents, and the community to meet students' educational needs more equitably and, in turn,

enhances students' opportunities for a quality education.

We must not allow the War on Poverty to continue to degenerate into a misdirected war on and between teachers and students in poverty (ASCD, 2015; Goldstein, 2014; Rose, 2015; Schneider, 2017). To make progress in the War on Poverty, it is imperative that we work together in and across schools, homes, communities, and society to build capacity and equity for all students, especially students in poverty. As President Johnson (1964) said in his War on Poverty speech, "we shall not rest until that war is won. The richest nation on earth can afford to win it. We cannot afford to lose it" (para. 3).

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