

Unpacking Poverty and Its Impact on Student Success: *Colloquium II*

Concentrated Neighborhood Poverty

Tuesday, March 10, 2015

Members of The Pathways from Poverty Consortium

Robert Balfanz, Ph.D., Research Scientist, Co-Director, Center for Social Organization of Schools (CSOS)

Maxine Wood, Ed.D, Director/Senior Advisor, Pathways from Poverty

Richard Lofton, Ph.D. Post-doctoral fellow

Daniel Princiotta, Ph.D. candidate

Presented at the Colloquium II on Unpacking Poverty and Its Impact on Student Success,
organized by the Pathways from Poverty Consortium -- Baltimore, MD



CENTER FOR SOCIAL
ORGANIZATION OF SCHOOLS

Overview of Presentation-

A Three-Act Play with a Prelude

- **Prelude** - Defining Poverty at Individual and Neighborhood Levels
- **Act 1** - What is Concentrated Poverty, Who Experiences it and Where is it Found?
- **Act 2** - How Does Concentrated Poverty Impact Student Success and Which Districts and Schools Face the Biggest Challenges?
- **Act 3** - What Do We Know About Solutions at the School and Neighborhood Levels?

Prelude:

Thinking About How
We Define Poverty
and
How This Informs
Our Perceptions and Actions

Poverty can be both an individual/family experience and a group/neighborhood experience

Poverty at individual/family level

means not having enough money to provide/acquire the basics (food, shelter, clothing, heat, medicine, etc.) and/or to live in a safe and healthy environment.

Poverty at Group/Neighborhood Level

means living in areas where many other people are poor as well, or, as the census defines it, in ‘a spatial density of socio-economic deprivation’.

Poverty and Low Income are not the same thing, though in the media, policy reports, and daily conversation they are often used interchangeably.

*See handout for example

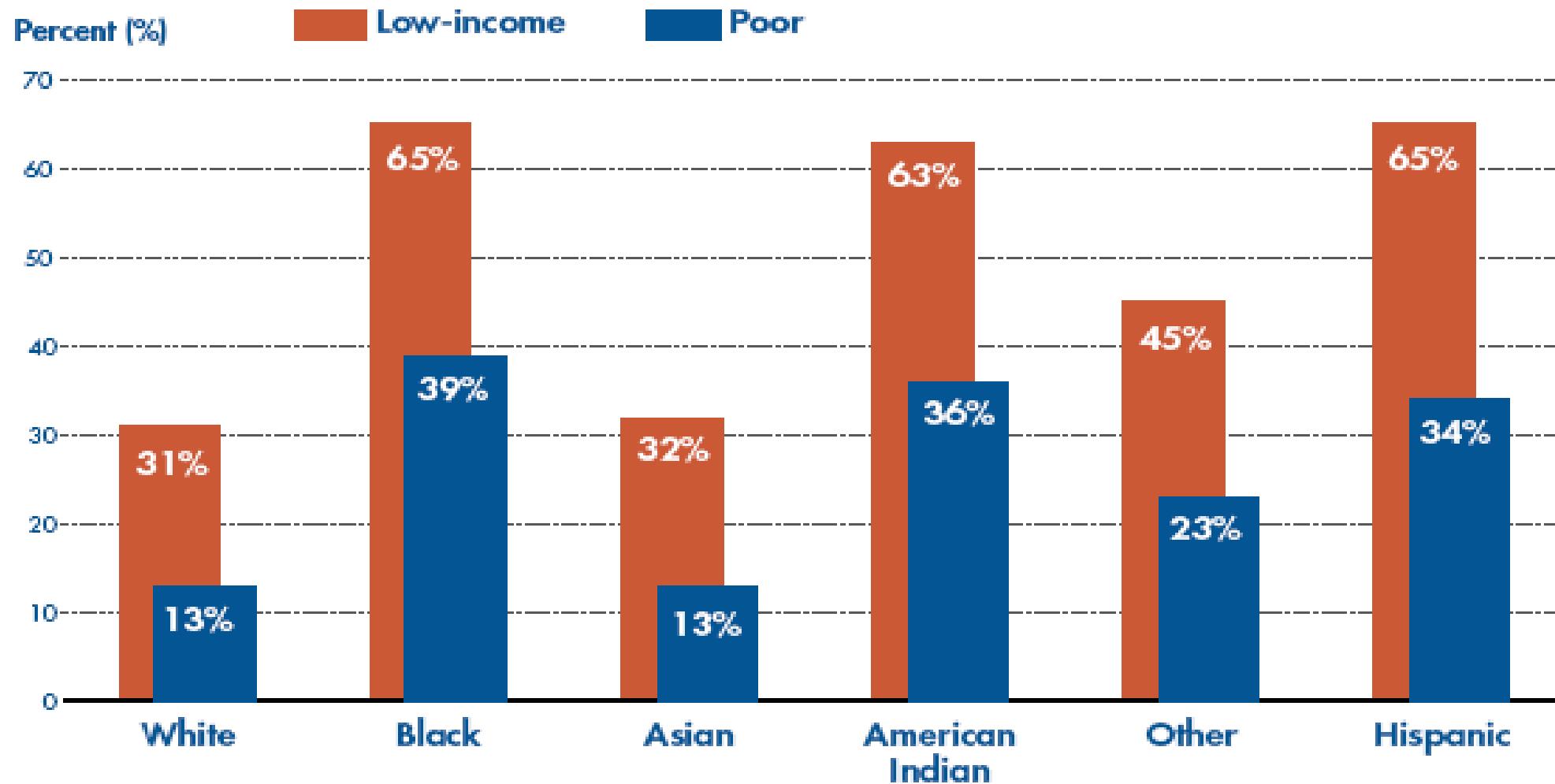
Defining Economic Hardship

- **Federal/Census Definitions of Individual/Family Economic Hardship**
 - Low-income: Less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level
(Household of 4 is \$48,500 or below)
 - Poverty: Less than 100% of the Federal Poverty Level
(Household of 4 is \$24,250 or below)
 - Extreme Poverty: Less than 50% of the Federal Poverty Level
(Household of 4 is \$12,125 or below)

How Many People and Children Experience Economic Hardship?

Economic Hardship Status (Percent of Poverty Level)	Total Persons Who Experience in US	Income Range for Family of Four	Total Number and Percent of All Children Who Experience in US
Low Income (100%-199%)	60 million	\$24,251- \$48,500	16 Million (22%)
Poverty (excluding most extreme level) (50% to 99%)	25.6 million	\$12,125- \$24,250	8.6 Million (12%)
Extreme Poverty (< 50%)	20.4 million	0\$- \$12,125	7.2 Million (10%)
Total All Economic Hardship Status	106 million		31.8 Million (44%)

Percentage of Children in Low-Income and Poor Families by Race/Ethnicity



Defining Economic Hardship In Schools

- **Free and Reduced Lunch Income Eligibility¹**
 - Free Meals--at or below 130% of the federal poverty level (A household of 4 annual income is \$30,615 or below)
 - Reduced Price Meals-up to 185% of federal poverty level (A household of 4 annual income is \$44,123)

¹ Federal Register, 2014: Effective from July 1, 2014-June 30, 2015

Thus, when school free and reduced price lunch levels are used as a measure of “poverty,” it combines students who live in poverty with a sub-set of low-income students

This means that two schools with equal numbers of economically disadvantaged students, as measured by free and reduced price lunch levels, can serve two very different sets of students.

At the Extreme: Two Schools with 50% FRPL Student Populations

School A-50% FRPL Population

- Two -thirds of families have incomes of \$35,000 or more
- One-third of families have incomes of less than \$24,000
- 15% of all students in school live in poverty

School B-50% FRPL Population

- Half of the families have incomes below \$12,500
- Half of the families have incomes between \$12,500 and \$24,000
- 50% of all students in school live in poverty

Defining Poverty by Place

- **High-Poverty Neighborhoods**-census tracts with a poverty rate of at least 20% in a given year.
- **Distressed Neighborhoods**-census tracts with a poverty rate of at least 40% in a given year.

Bureau of the Census, 1970

Why Were These Thresholds Chosen?

- Available evidence shows that at the 20% threshold one begins to see impacts of living in a neighborhood of socio-economic deprivation, above and beyond the individual impacts of poverty, controlling for other individual and group characteristics.
- Impacts of neighborhood poverty accelerate as concentrations climb from 20% to 40% when they appear to max out. When it was established in the 1970s, the 40% threshold also corresponded to what were commonly seen as “ghetto” neighborhoods.

Being Low-Income or Poor in a High-Poverty Neighborhood Creates a Double Burden

- Living in communities with a large concentration of poverty causes additional burdens on residents
 - Beyond their own family circumstances
 - Must confront the poverty of those around them
 - Additional burdens that are associated with poverty
 - Higher crime rates, poor housing conditions, fewer job opportunities and more limited access to healthy food

The Enduring Challenge of Concentrated Poverty in America, 2008

<http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2008/10/24-concentrated-poverty>

Neighborhood Poverty Has Increased Substantially in the Past Decade

Brookings Institute Report on Growth and Spread of Concentrated Poverty 2000-2012

<http://www.brookings.edu/research/interactives/2014/concentrated-poverty#/M10420>

.... as poverty has spread, it has not done so evenly. Instead, it has also become more clustered and concentrated in distressed and high-poverty neighborhoods, eroding the [brief progress made against concentrated poverty](#) during the late 1990s.

The challenges of poor neighborhoods—including worse health outcomes, higher crime rates, failing schools, and fewer job opportunities—make it that much harder for individuals and families to escape poverty and often perpetuate and entrench poverty across generations.²

² Reserve System and the Brookings Institution, “The Enduring Challenge of Concentrated Poverty in America. For a review of the literature on the effects of concentrated poverty, see the Federal: Case Studies from Communities Across the U.S.” (Richmond, VA: 2008); and Patrick Sharkey, *Stuck in Place: Urban Neighborhoods and the End of Progress Toward Racial Equality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

Number of People Who Experience Neighborhood Poverty

Percent of People in Census Track who Live in Poverty	Number of Census Tracts	Total Number Living There (Millions)	Percent of US Population Living There	Percent of Poor Living There	Number of Poor Living There	Number and Percent of Children Living There
20% +		77.4 million	25.7%	53.5%	23.9 million	20.3 Million (28%)
30% +		30 million	10%	27.8%		10.1 Million (14%)
40% +	3570	11.6 million	4%	12.2%	5.4 million	

Complex takeaway: At least half of the people in high-poverty/distressed neighborhoods are not poor, but given what we know about residential segregation, most are likely low income, especially in distressed neighborhoods (nationally 75% poor or low income). Thus, low-income students in these neighborhoods are affected by living in concentrated poverty as well as students living in poverty. The key metric in terms of impact on student success is the percent of students living in these neighborhoods, and the concentration of them within schools.

Thus, the growth of neighborhood poverty over the past decade suggests that the scale and intensity of student needs have likely increased in the schools that serve these areas.

Mapping the growth of neighborhood poverty shows that this impact has been unevenly felt across states and regions.

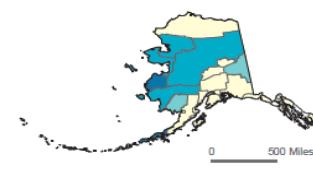
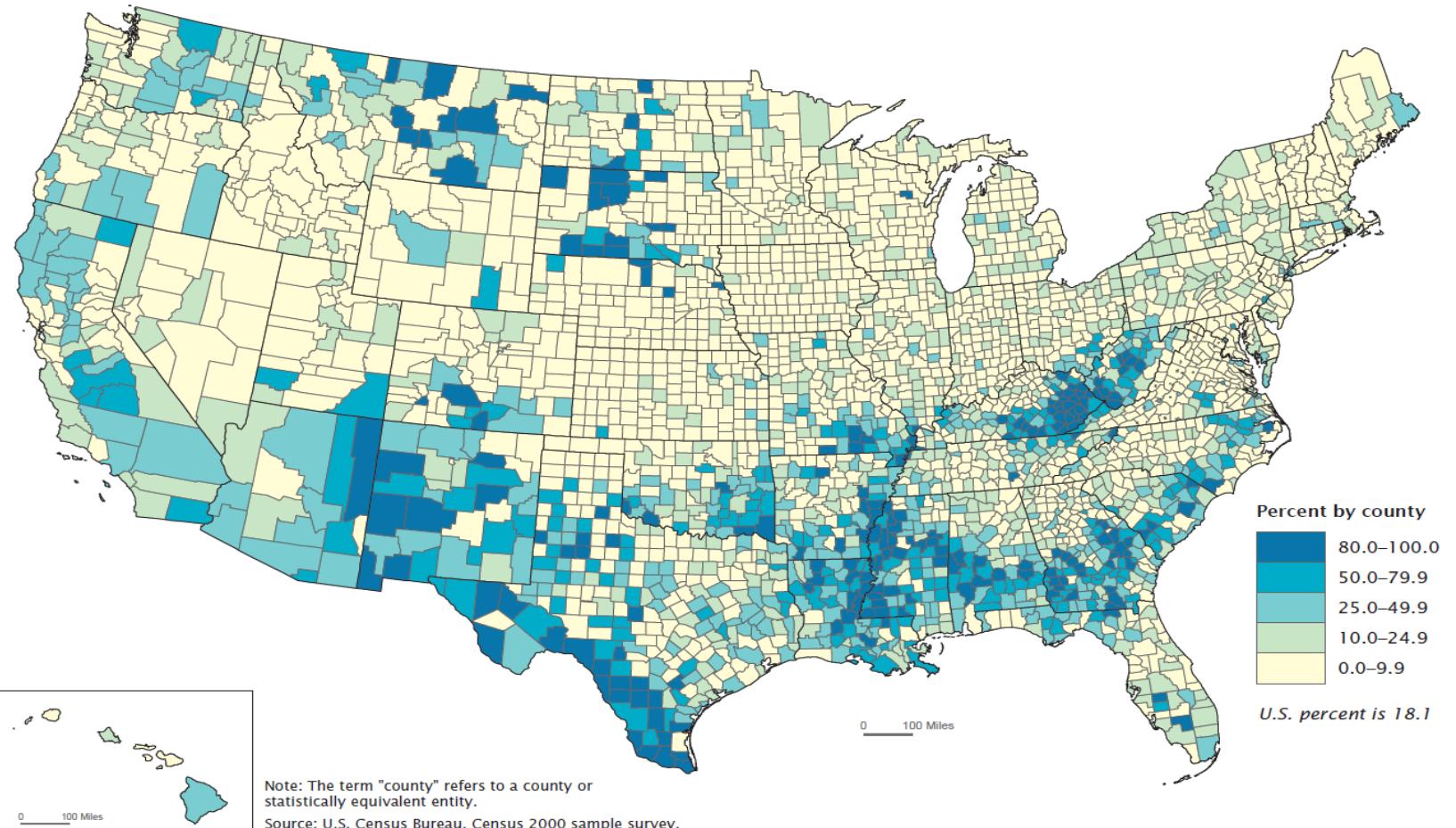
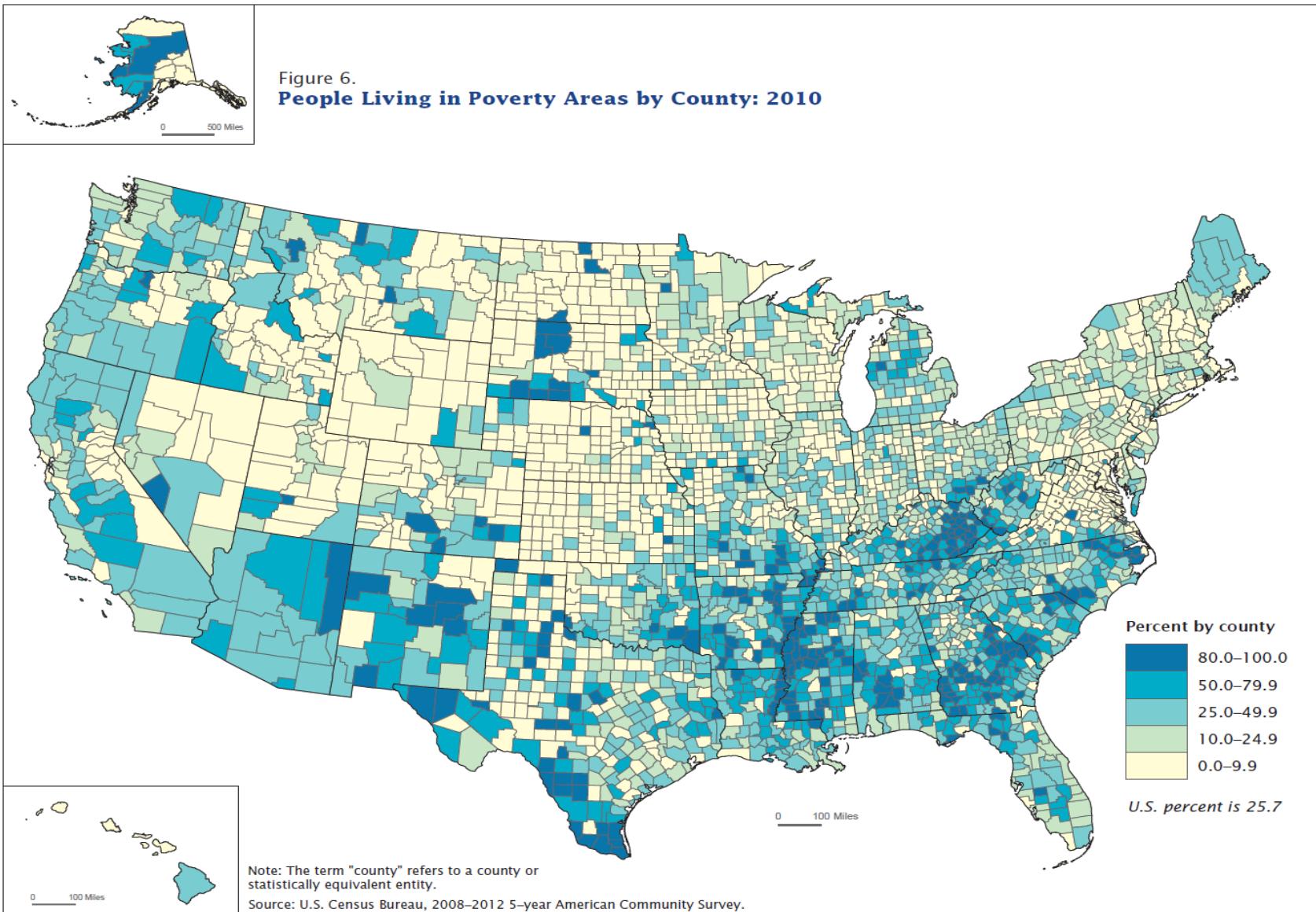


Figure 5.
People Living in Poverty Areas by County: 2000





Our focus will be on the students
and schools that experience
concentrated poverty at its most
extreme--those who live in
neighborhoods with 40% or higher
poverty rates

Concentrated Poverty and Student Success in Three Acts

Act 1 - Who, What, Where?

- Who is affected?
- Trace the historical and contemporary routes
- Highlight the impacts of social and cultural Isolation
- Examine multi-generational impacts

Act 2 - Impact on Students and Schools

- What are the educational consequences?
- How many schools and districts experience the impacts of students living in concentrated poverty, and at what magnitude?

Act 3 - What Can Be Done?

- Examine what we know about solutions