

# Ascending or Not: School Profiles and Intergenerational Mobility

MACS 30122 Winter 2025

Ascending Team

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March 5th, 2025

# 1 Introduction

## 2 Data Collection

## 3 Data Cleaning and Wrangling

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# Research Questions and Significance

## Research Questions

- Which factors/characteristics of school profile contribute to the prediction of intergenerational mobility?

## Research Significance

- Address a critical social issue by exploring how educational quality affects economic mobility.
- Inform policies aimed at reducing educational disparities
- Foster equitable opportunities for upward mobility
- Contribute to broader discussions about education and social justice.

# Hypothesis

- The racial composition of a school is expected to be a significant predictor of mobility (Jang and Reardon 2019, Matheny et.al 2023).
- Schools with a higher proportion of students from lower-income families are likely to exhibit lower rates of social mobility (Jang and Reardon 2019, Scherger and Savage 2010, Beckett 2024).
- Schools with greater academic resources such as lower student-to-teacher ratios and access to SAT prep courses are expected to foster higher upward mobility (Blizard 2020).
- Schools with more positive reviews are anticipated to be associated with greater upward mobility (Beckett 2024).

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# School Profiles

## School Statistics

Academics and Student Demographics, with Academics covering areas such as College Preparation, Advanced Courses, and Test Scores and Student Demographics covering Students Ethnicity, Family Income and so on.

## School Reviews

We collected reviews on schools from

- Parents/Guardians
- School Staffs
- Alumni
- Family Members
- and so on...

# School Profiles (Cont'd)

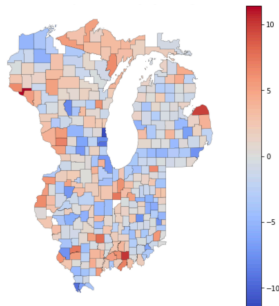
## Challenges

- We met a problem with the dynamic websites that when scrapping the Greatschools.org, *Selenium* slows down the process.
- The government data doesn't provide sufficient granularity to answer the questions.

## Solutions

- We collected schools data and reviews utilizing the Greatschools.org API.
- We use the census and government data to supplement the school data collected from Greatschools.org.

# Intergenerational Mobility



**Figure 1:** Upward Mobility with State FE

Counties with the highest upward mobility, shown in dark red, are located in eastern Wisconsin, northern Michigan, southern Illinois, and western Indiana. The study (Chetty et al. 2014) leverages millions of tax records (admin data from the IRS), providing a much larger and more accurate dataset compared to survey-based studies.



# Evaluating Independent Variable: School Profiles

- Source: GreatSchools.org
- Sample Size: 19,612 school-level observations, 350 county-level observations, 76 commuting zone-level observations.
- Time Period: Feb 7th - 21st, 2025
- Pros:
  - Provides ratings and reviews for a vast number of schools across the U.S.
  - Capture different dimensions of school quality and demographic data.
  - Includes stakeholders' reviews and insights, useful for analyzing how perceived school quality influences mobility.
- Cons:
  - Bias in ratings and reviews
  - Some schools may not have complete data

# Evaluating Dependent Variable: Intergenerational Mobility

- Source: Chetty et al. (2014)
- Sample Size: 3,141 county-level national-wide observations and 734 commuting zone-level national-wide observations.
- Operationalization:
  - Absolute Mobility: The expected income rank of children whose parents were at the 25th percentile of the income distribution.
  - Relative Mobility: The relationship between a child's income percentile and their parents' income percentile.
- Pros:
  - Robust statistical power and reduces sampling error.
  - Mobility is measured at the CZ and county levels, allowing for a fine-grained comparison of regional variations.
- Cons:
  - Introduces potential aggregation bias when aggregating school data.
  - Time mismatch between Chetty et al. (2014) data and 2025 GreatSchools scraped data.

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# Four-layer Structure

## Data Transformation

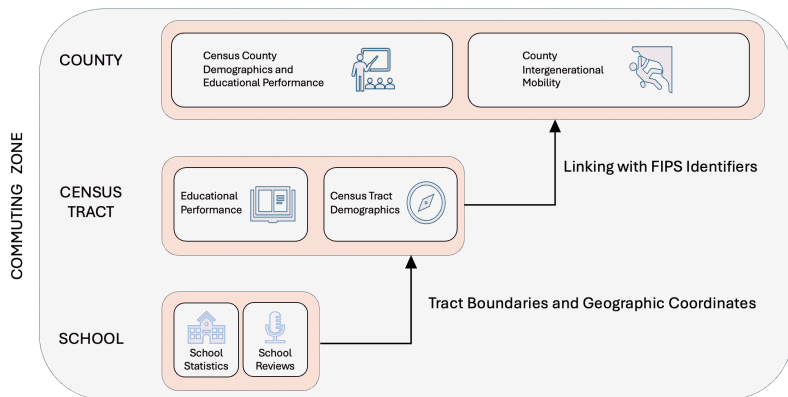


Figure 2: Illustration of the Four-Layer Structure

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# Sentiment Analysis

## Example 1: Highly Positive



Parent / Guardian

★★★★★ July 27, 2023

My oldest son graduated from Kenwood and he often spoke about how supportive the teachers were towards him and how they encouraged him to excel and do his best. He loved that the administration was always supportive and easy to talk to as well. He knew not only the teachers but also the admin pushed him and expected great things from him. We enjoyed the experience so much that now my other son is looking forward to beginning his high school year there as a freshmen this fall and becoming a bronco. My family highly recommends Kenwood Academy.

## Example 2: Highly Negative



Other (school staff, family member, recent alum, etc)

★☆☆☆☆ October 04, 2014

This school is prison, a place which you'll find yourself dreading arrival upon every morning. I feel only absolute sympathy for any future generations that will be forced to endure it.

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# Feature Engineering

## First Stage: Feature Selection via Correlation Matrix

- Remove highly correlated features (e.g., Math and English grades)
- Reduced from 173 features to 28
- Selected features come from: Rating, Demographics (Subgroup, Gender, Ethnicity), Teachers & Staff, College Preparation, Courses & Programs

## Second Stage: Lasso-based Feature Selection

- Further reduce features to 9 for Fixed Effect Regression
- Selected Features:

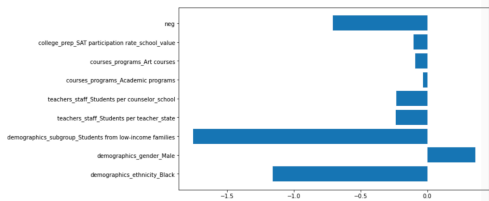


Figure 3: Feature Importance via LASSO

# Causal Inference

**Table 1:** OLS Regression Results at County Level

	<b>Coef.</b>	<b>Std. Err.</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>P&gt; t </b>
Constant	49.4712	3.164	15.637	0.000
Black	-0.1855	0.021	-8.639	0.000
Male	0.1060	0.060	1.777	0.077
Low-income	-0.1359	0.015	-8.878	0.000
Students per teacher	-0.0632	0.019	-3.392	0.001
Negative Comments	-43.9415	11.169	-3.934	0.000
...	...	...	...	...
State-FE	Yes			

# Causal Inference (Cont'd)

## Regression Results

Notably, a higher proportion of Black students and students from low-income families are associated with lower mobility, while negative ratings and availability of study resources also play a crucial role. This finding aligns with broader research on systemic barriers to economic mobility faced by marginalized groups.

# Robust Analysis

## Parallel Dataset at the Commuting Zone Level

**Table 2:** OLS Regression Results at Commuting Zone Level

	<b>coef</b>	<b>std err</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>P&gt; t </b>
Constant	38.1562	7.841	4.866	0.000
Black	-0.2235	0.059	-3.812	0.000
Male	0.3006	0.157	1.918	0.056
Low-income	-0.1283	0.032	-3.959	0.000
Students per teacher	-0.0427	0.039	-1.084	0.279
Negative Comments	-61.5299	29.083	-2.116	0.035
...	...	...	...	...
State-FE	Yes			

# Robust Analysis (Cont'd)

## Random Forest Method at the County Level

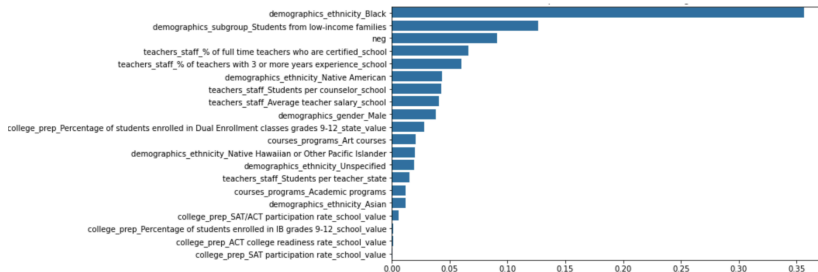


Figure 4: Feature Importance with Random Forest at County Level

# Regression Results Grouped by State

Table 2: Subgroup Regression Results for Absolute Upward Mobility

Dependent Variable:	IL	MI	WI	IN
	Absolute Upward Mobility			
<b>Constant</b>	50.678*** (4.337)	55.475*** (5.423)	46.498*** (8.978)	8.675 (10.932)
<b>demographics_ethnicity_Black</b>	-0.201*** (0.032)	-0.187*** (0.034)	-0.162** (0.062)	-0.130** (0.056)
<b>demographics_gender_Male</b>	0.091 (0.083)	-0.111 (0.093)	0.281* (0.167)	0.903*** (0.205)
<b>demographics_subgroup_Low-income</b>	-0.110*** (0.025)	-0.082** (0.032)	-0.211*** (0.033)	-0.178*** (0.034)
<b>teachers_staff_Students per teacher</b>	-0.104** (0.032)	-0.033 (0.029)	-0.036 (0.050)	-0.070* (0.040)
<b>teachers_staff_Students per counselor</b>	-0.0067** (0.003)	0.0008 (0.002)	-0.0034 (0.003)	0.0038 (0.002)
Observations	97	81	69	90

# Robust Analysis (Cont'd)

## Heterogeneity Analysis



Figure 5: Radar Graph of Heterogeneity Analysis (Grouped by State)

# Robust Analysis (Cont'd)

## Variable Correlations

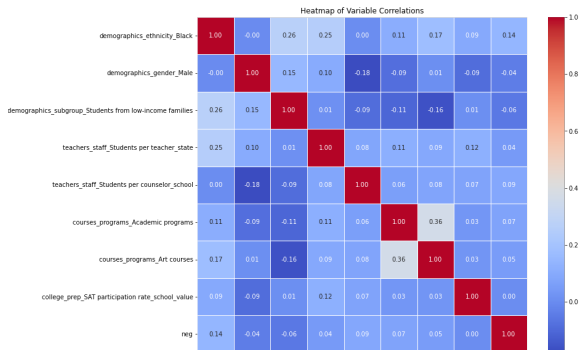


Figure 6: Heatmap of Variable Correlations



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# Insights and Improvements

## Insights

Our project indicates that race is a predominant determinant of intergenerational mobility, followed by the influence of income and educational resources. This effect remains robust across both county-level and commuting zone-level analyses.

## Improvements

- We could collect data for multiple periods.
- We could collect national data.
- We may conduct experiments to identify causality.
- Use instrumental variables.

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# References

- [1] R. Chetty, N. Hendren, P. Kline, and E. Saez, “Where is the land of opportunity? the geography of intergenerational mobility in the united states,” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 2014.
- [2] M. Beckett, “How class impacts on education and social mobility,” in *Student Transitions from Further Education to University*, (Switzerland), pp. 77–99, Springer International Publishing, 2024.
- [3] H. Jang and S. F. Reardon, “Uneven progress: Recent trends in academic performance among u.s. school districts,” *AERA Open*, 2019.
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# Thank You