

The Faults of Urban Education



Shutterstock Image

“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.”

Benjamin Franklin

Written on behalf of College of the Ozarks to help repair the lack of education in urban regions.

Introduction

Population has become a significant issue for schools as educators struggle to find a way to reach student in urban areas where many circumstances oppose productive learning (National Center for Education Statistics). As these ensuing conditions result in poor urban education, the poor education causes a cycle of even worse circumstances, continually growing into a larger and larger problem. Additionally, as the world's population becomes progressively more urban, the importance of addressing the disparity between the public schools in large cities and those in suburban and rural areas will only grow. Since education is the backbone of both individual and national success, it is important to address its flaws, their causes, and possible prevention strategies. Furthermore, it is highly important that educators understand these flaws and take the necessary, preventative measures.

Causes of Erroneous Urban Education

Though many educators recognize the growing disparity between urban education and education elsewhere, many people still do not understand that the causes, largely overcrowding and poor teaching, are a natural result of the setting and must be actively fought for any hopes of success.

In large cities, the ratio between the number of schools and population grows more drastic which in turn causes the overflow of classrooms with students. In these areas, classrooms frequently exceed thirty or forty students; likewise, faculty becomes overwhelmed by the sheer number of students. Additionally, a student's propensity for success varies largely on the one-on-one interactions they have with the teacher. Another consequence of overcrowded classrooms is the lack of discipline that frequently ensues when the teacher is simply too busy to deal with everyone. Finally, struggling students in this environment rarely receive adequate attention.

Consequently, these effects of the overcrowding of the urban schools contribute to a lack of good educators in large cities; statistically, experienced teachers not only have the option to teach in nicer schools, but very frequently will. This leaves the already-struggling urban schools the poor teachers to try to grasp the attention of the overcrowded classrooms. Unfortunately, this phenomenon means that while poor teachers cause poor students, poor students also contribute to the influx of more poor teachers, resulting in a snowball effect (Meador).

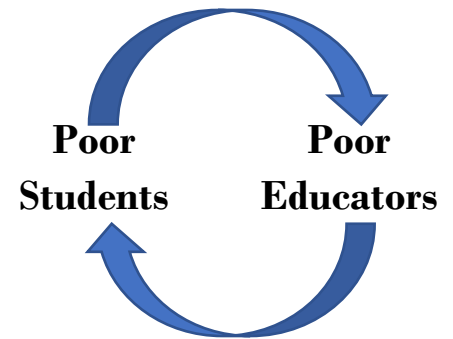
Effects

The chronic overcrowding and lack of good educators contributes to several other factors that hinder effective education in urban areas. As the classrooms reach their maximum capacity, supplies begin to be stretched thin resulting in more challenges for the students as they try to make do with limited tools. Consequently, graduation rates and standardized test scores both decline (Meador).

Finally, most successful students can reference at least one specific teacher in their past who built a personal connection with them and inspired them to strive for success. Conversely, as classrooms grow overcrowded, these inspiring relationships become less and less common, resulting in a more apathetic teaching environment.

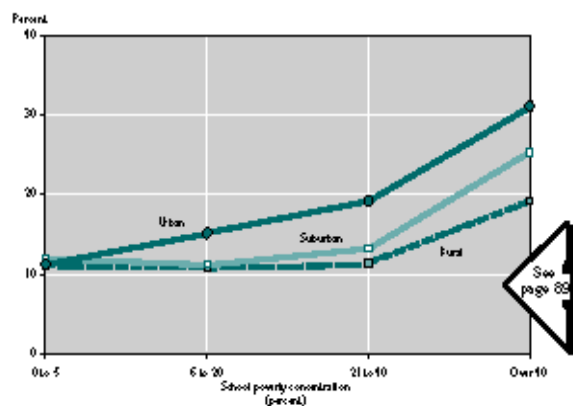


CBS New York



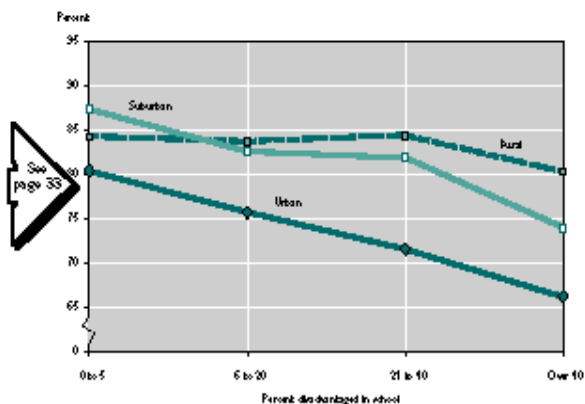
“Classroom overcrowding has sadly become the new normal. It is not likely going to go away anytime soon so schools and teachers must create workable solutions to make the best out of a bad situation” (Meador).

Figure F
Percentage of principals who report difficulty hiring teachers, by urbanicity and school poverty concentration: 1987-88



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey, 1987-88, Administrator File.

Figure I
Percentage graduating on time among the sophomore class of 1980, by urbanicity and percent disadvantaged in school



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, High School and Beyond Study, Third Follow-up Survey, 1986.

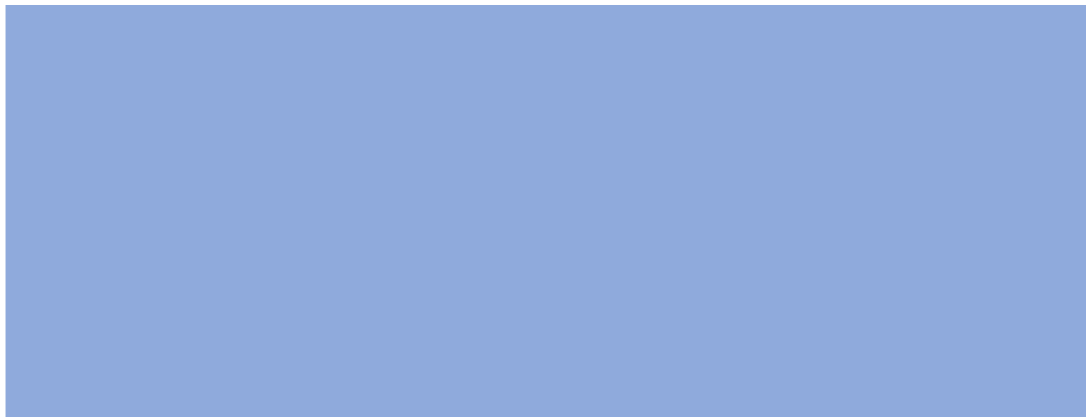
Preventative Measures

Some adjustments must be made to guarantee the successful future of academia in the face of the growing urban population and complex obstacles that students face. As the representatives of America's future, they need to be taught with effective methods by strong teachers. Taxes should be distributed more proportionally to the population levels of schools in cities so that principals can afford to hire experienced educators who will personally invest in the students. Connections need to be built between successful schools in more rural and suburban areas so that their education models and resources can be easily applied to schools that are struggling. Along with these concrete steps, urban schools need to raise awareness of their own difficult situations and seek help and advice from educators elsewhere. Most importantly, inner city teachers and faculty members need to illustrate their need for support. The first step to repairing education is to educate others about the need for repairs. Urban schools need to restore nuclear families by educating about the negative effects of single motherhood on poverty, crime, and academics (Garry). Each generation has a responsibility to secure the education of the next generation, regardless of where a person might live. Without these preventative measures, the school system will likely continue to digress as the population in cities grows.





Knowledge Center for Teachers



Conclusion

Though the education in cities is ridden with erroneous methods, America is only one generation from fixing this growing disparity between urban and rural schools. If a new methodology can be implemented to more effectively distribute students and prevent overcrowding, it would restore inspiring, one-to-one interactions between students and teachers (Brue). If new rewards were given to experienced teachers who taught in cities, it would bring a lot of good educators back to where they are most needed. The issue has grown over recent years but educating others about the flawed urban academics has the potential to unite Americans into constructing positive changes that will benefit the nation.

Work Cited

- Briscoe, Jake. "Average High School Teacher Salary 2018 - Updated Income Figures." *Gazette Review*, 3 Jan. 2018. gazetterevue.com/2017/02/average-high-school-teacher-salary-much-high-school-teachers-make/.
- Brue, Alan. "Framing Urban School Challenges: The Problems to Examine When Implementing Response to Intervention." *Selecting an RTI Education Model | RTI Action Network*, www.rtinetwork.org/learn/diversity/urban-school-challenges.
- CBSNewYork. "Hempstead Parents Call For Surrounding School Districts To Help Alleviate Overcrowding." *CBS New York*, CBS New York, 16 Oct. 2014, newyork.cbslocal.com/2014/10/16/hempstead-parents-call-for-surrounding-school-districts-to-help-alleviate-overcrowding/.
- "Empty Classroom Stock Video Footage - 4K and HD Video Clips." *City Of Forks City Limit Sign - FORKS / WASHINGTON. APRIL 13, 2017 Stock Footage Video 28374238 | Shutterstock*, The Shutterstock Blog, www.shutterstock.com/video/search/empty-classroom.
- Garry, Stephanie. "Statistics Don't Lie in This Case." *@Politifact*, 23 June 2008, www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2008/jun/23/barack-obama/statistics-dont-lie-in-this-case/.
- "Knowledge Center: For Teachers." *Benefits and Challenges of Teaching in an Urban School*, www.teacherssupportnetwork.com/corporate/KnowledgeCenterArticle.do?id=5.
- Meador, Derrick. "What Teachers Can Do to Combat an Overcrowded Classroom." *Thoughtco.*, Dotdash, www.thoughtco.com/teaching-in-an-overcrowded-classroom-3194352.
- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Home Page, a Part of the U.S. Department of Education*, National Center for Education Statistics, nces.ed.gov/pubs/web/96184ex.asp.
- "The Teacher Hazing Ritual." *U.S. News & World Report*, U.S. News & World Report, www.usnews.com/opinion/knowledge-bank/articles/2016-03-25/poor-teacher-training-omits-classroom-management-expects-first-year-fails.



Gazette Review

“Even in the midst of tremendous political attention, low student performance persists. This is often exemplified by many students performing poorly on tests and not performing at grade level.”

RTI Action Network