Grant Proposal

Education4Everyone

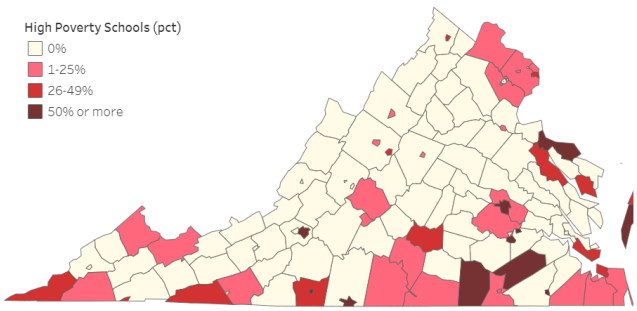
Shedding light on the need for wider access to educational resources and the ramifications of teacher shortages on HCPS students.

Submitted to: Mr. Baumgartner

Date: 11/11/2022

Proposal

Conflict:



A lack of educational resources and teacher shortages are disproportionately affecting low- income and minority students in Henrico County, Virginia. Data reveals that schools with a higher concentration of poverty and larger minority populations are more inequitable in terms of educational opportunities.

Virginia has 212 public schools with high concentrations of students from low-income families. These schools are mostly found in the Greater Richmond and Hampton Roads regions. Richmond City has the most of any division with 29 high-poverty schools, with about 63% of students in the division enrolled in one of them. Other divisions with many high-poverty schools include Norfolk, Roanoke City, Prince William, Newport News, Danville, Hampton, and Henrico (Duncombe).

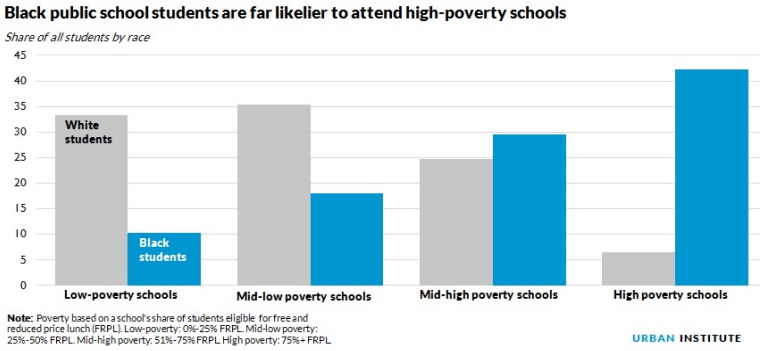
Henrico's schools are currently dealing with a growing perception in eastern Henrico, in which many African Americans reside, that there is an uneven distribution of educational resources. Ratings released by the Virginia Department of Education show that out of the 17 schools that are currently struggling to earn accreditation in Henrico County, 16 of the schools are in Eastern Henrico (Moomaw). Tara Adams, who advocates for closing the achievement gap of black students in Henrico County, states that the school division has not adequately dealt with the situation in Fairfield and Varina district schools (Kebede). Hodge, a 19-year math interventionist at several eastern Henrico schools, also had children attending Varina High School and Deep Run High School respectively. He commented that the experience "showed disparities in education and policies at the two schools favoring students in the west, which strikes at a common notion among residents in Varina" (Kebede).

The ratings fuel the ongoing debate over the allocation of Henrico's resources in the east versus the west, a discussion "tinged with issues of race and income" (Moomaw). School officials have begun to invest in helping eastern Henrico students reach state standards, and education officials have attributed the issue to increasing rigor in Standards of Learning tests (Moomaw). When asked about the geography of the struggling schools, Bondy Shay Gibson said students in the eastern districts are equally as capable and motivated as others. "They simply need more support from the school division to reach their goals," she said. "And that's exactly what they're going to get" (Moomaw).

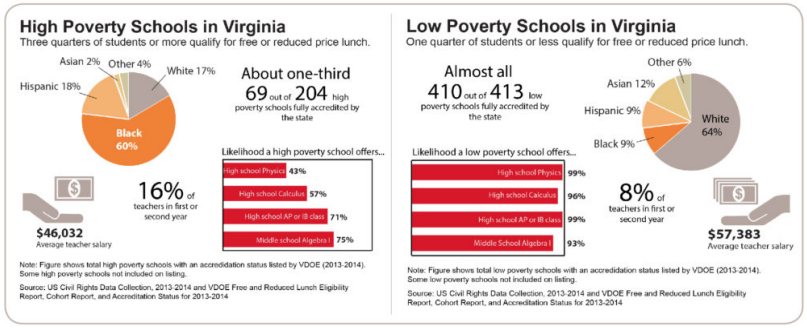
Students in high-poverty schools lack experienced instructors and access to necessary/rigorous courses, such as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate. For example, 93% of low-poverty schools in the state offered Algebra 1, a foundational course for transitioning to higher-level math, compared to 75% of high-poverty schools. Additionally, 99% of low-poverty high schools offered at least one AP or IB class, whereas only 71% of high-poverty schools did the same. On average, high-poverty schools offered 10 AP and IB courses, while low-poverty schools offered 19 (Duncombe).

Next, high-poverty schools have lower spending levels on instructors and instructional materials. According to the Commonwealth Institute, "High poverty schools spent 10 percent less per student on instructors, instructional materials, and professional development than low poverty schools using state and local resources in 2013-2014" (Duncombe). Clearly, Virginia does not prioritize quality instruction for schools with students who have greater needs outside the classroom.

Furthermore, students of color in Virginia schools are over-represented in high-poverty schools. For years, public and private housing discrimination practices have ensured that colored families of all socioeconomic classes live in high-poverty areas, exposing their children to schools segregated by race and income (Jordan). As a result, these students are deprived of opportunities to pursue their academic ambitions. According to The Commonwealth Institute, "one out of every six students of color (15 percent) in Virginia attended a high-poverty school in the 2013-2014 school year, as did more than one out of every five (22 percent) Black students - compared to just 3 percent of White students" (Duncombe). Student performance reflects these disparities: the consequences are seen in worse attendance, standardized testing, college enrollment, and graduation rates (Duncombe). More recent statistics in ProPublica's database demonstrate these differences in opportunity in Henrico Schools. Varina High and Ward Elementary School, which are located in East Henrico County, have student populations composed of 68% and 64% black students respectively. In contrast, Deep Run High and Colonial Trail Elementary School, which are in West Henrico County, have black student populations of 5% and 8% respectively ("Miseducation | Henrico County Public Schools"). In the entire Henrico County Public Schools District, white students are 2.4 times more likely to be enrolled in at least one AP course than black students ("Miseducation | Henrico County Public Schools"). On average, black students are 2.4 academic grades behind white students, and they are 4.6 times as likely to be suspended. Overall, recent figures demonstrate the high segregation index between black and white students in HCPS, indicating the uneven distribution of these racial groups among schools in the district.



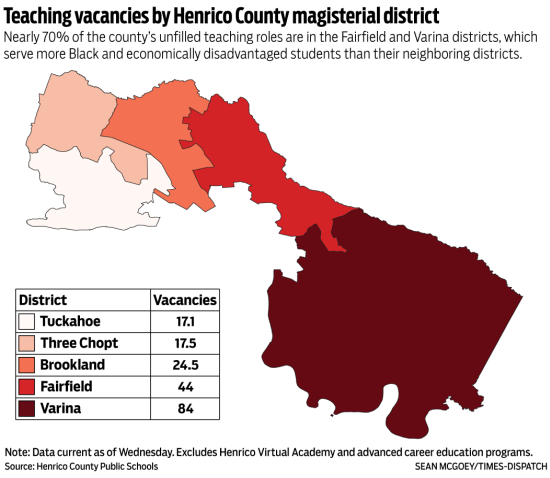
This graph demonstrates the correlation between "poverty segregation" and racial segregation in the nation's public schools. It reveals how black students are four times more likely to attend a high-poverty school than a low-poverty school, and over six times more likely than white students to attend a high-poverty school.



These statistics corroborate the information in the graph above. They reveal significant differences in accreditation and demographic makeup of high-poverty vs. low-poverty schools. It also illustrates how high-poverty schools tend

to have a lower percentage of qualified teachers and less variety in course offerings, both of which detrimentally impact the success of students.

Teachers play a fundamental role in the improvement of education because they serve as role models and supporters for students. However, recruiting and retaining exceptional educators has become an urgent issue and has been negatively impacting schools serving students of color and low-income students. This is due to teacher attrition, and it disproportionately impacts several schools in Henrico. "In 2012–13, almost one in 10 teachers in high-poverty public schools left the profession. In contrast, fewer than one in 15 teachers in low-poverty schools did so…" (Podolsky et al.). The persistently increased rates of turnover in high-poverty, high-minority schools affect the concentration of underprepared teachers in many schools. In Henrico County, schools and administrators are not culturally prepared to grapple with the implications of teacher vacancies and inexperienced staff. An article published in July 2022 summarizes Henrico County's current situation- the division is seeking to hire around 200 teachers to compensate for the dire shortage (Moors). Moreover, 21 Eastern Henrico County Public Schools account for 125, or about 60%, of vacant in-school positions (Lappas).



This map reflects how more teacher vacancies are in districts serving more students of color and economically disadvantaged students.

Overall, Henrico County Public Schools have recently undergone positive shifts in student demographics. According to a 2018 report, HCPS "has more than doubled its number of Asian and Latinx students, while its Black student population has increased slightly and its White student population has declined" over the past decade. As a result, the current student population of HCPS is extremely diverse - "39.9% White, 35.5% Black, 9.1% Latinx, 10.5% Asian, and 4.9% other races" (Holton et al.). However, a large proportion of these students, particularly from high-poverty schools, are negatively affected by the disparities outlined above. Despite there being measurable differences in the educational opportunities provided to students in high-poverty versus low-poverty schools, investing in the issue is commonly deemed "wasteful." Our proposal aims to address these issues with the urgency they warrant.

Statement of Need:

A problem in our community (Henrico County) is that many students do not have access to educational resources, restricting them from reaching their full educational potential. A scarcity of teachers to fill educator roles across the county exacerbates these issues. All students should have equal opportunities for learning, regardless of factors such as race, poverty, and demographic background. However, some students are currently treated as less deserving of education than others, which needs to be addressed.

Program Description:

Education4Everyone will help students from low income families receive proper, fair access to educational resources at Henrico County Public Schools. The goals we hope to accomplish through E4E center around inequity in education and teacher shortage issues in HCPS. The grant funds will go towards several initiatives that serve to distribute more educational resources to the underprivileged, make the entry process smoother for new teachers, and draw attention to the conflict outlined above.

1) Teacher Mentorship Program - Since various schools in Henrico place inexperienced teachers in schools with a higher concentration of students from low-income families, a proposed solution is to start a teacher-for-a-teacher mentoring program where more experienced teachers can host small workshops for less experienced ones. We want to write a letter to our administrator proposing such a program at our school and explaining the benefits of professional mentorship.

2) Website/Social Media - In correlation to teacher vacancies, many inexperienced teachers and substitutes are found in HCPS schools with more low-income and minority students. Through an online presence, we want to attract more interest to substitute teaching and help inexperienced teachers gain confidence in their roles. Specifically, we would like to contact skilled teachers and feature their professional input/advice on posts, whether in video or written format. Hopefully, our website will motivate new teachers to maintain their positions and encourage aspiring teachers to take the leap. Several schools, especially in eastern Henrico County, do not have adequate access to quality educational resources, but many platforms provide them at no cost. Thus, we want to create a list of open educational resources on our website as well.

3) Book/Study Material Drive - Most open educational resources are provided online. However, many students rely on physical materials to learn as well. To promote literacy and a comprehensive understanding of the VDOE curriculum, E4E plans to start a drive for books, textbooks, and other educational supplements. The drive will be ongoing over an extended time period (2-4 weeks), and it will take place at our school and local libraries. We will use our funds to purchase starting materials, such as a small bookcase, cardboard boxes, flyers, and others.

4) Tutoring Program Many students from these low-income families also struggle with finding affordable tutors, and some need extra help. Hence, E4E aspires to start a volunteer tutor program with high school students that are willing to tutor those from low-income backgrounds. We will locate students in low-income neighborhoods specifically and contact schools in those areas to garner interest for the free tutoring program. Once we have a list of students, we will create a spreadsheet to assign interested high-school volunteers to each one.

Project Timeline:
E4E will schedule events throughout the course of the 2022-23 school year. We will start the project as soon as Thanksgiving break of 2022 starts, and it will continue throughout the year.

Activity	**Date**	**Notes**
Submit Grant Proposal.	November 11th, 2022	
Expected Grant Notification.	November 22nd, 2022	
Obtain all required permissions from administrators at Tucker High and Twin Hickory Library to host our book/educational resource drive.	December 1st, 2022	*Message Mr. Raymond and contact Mr. Schulhoff.*
Draft letter to school administrator proposing a teacher mentorship program at Tucker.	December 1st, 2022	*Writing a compelling letter will require some research, so we want to have ample time to do this.*
Obtain all physical materials.	December 5th, 2022	*If we obtain the appropriate permissions, we will place a small bookshelf in our school and set up cardboard boxes to collect donations as well. We will need to send out a Schoology message about the drive and put up flyers around our community to spread the word. We may also ask local libraries for permission to host the drive.*
Publish a website and create a social media account.	December 10th, 2022	
Print flyers and begin the book drive.	December 15th, 2022	*Place flyers around neighborhoods, libraries, and schools*
Update website and social media.	December 17th, 2022	*The information in the website and social media account will update continually, but we hope to have both fully published by this time.*
Upload first “teacher testimonials” on our website.	December 20th, 2022	*To make sure we can meet this goal, we will need to give the teachers we contact at least ten days to respond.*
High school volunteer tutoring program information session.	December 25th, 2022	*Once we’ve gauged enough interest for the tutoring program, we will hold the information session. It will cover tips on how to tutor students and where to find instructional materials. We will also address questions about service hours. To assign students to volunteers, we will use a spreadsheet.*

Assessment of Impact:

Many of us come from families that are able to provide for our education, but it's no secret that students outside of our little bubble face challenges that diminish their success within the classroom. This can come from a wide variety of places, such as a lack of health care or nutritious food, and students from low-income families are disregarded when it comes to educational opportunities, as well as students that are part of minority groups. This might seem like a problem outside of Henrico, but it is occurring within our county as well. E4E will impact students from low-income backgrounds in a positive way. It will allow for a more equal distribution of educational resources within our community and more filled teacher vacancies and interest in being a substitute. E4E will raise awareness about inequity in education to help more students get the education they deserve. Factors such as race, poverty, and disability should not play a part in one's educational life, and E4E will impact students in such a way that prevents discrimination from having influence. Here are some specific ways we will measure the impact of our program on our community:

A. The number of books we can collect and the number of schools we can distribute them to as part of our educational materials drive.
B. How many teachers show interest in filming short videos about their professional experience on our website, and how many teachers are willing to partake in our mentorship program.
C. How many substitute teachers and new teachers feel more confident in their position as a direct result of our efforts. This feedback will be collected through our survey.
D. How many volunteers we can recruit for our high school volunteer tutoring program, and how many students in low-income schools enroll.

Budget Outline:

Item Name	Quantity	Price Per Item	Total Price
Bookshelf	1	29.99	$29.99
Cardboard Boxes - 10 pack	One order (10 boxes)	18.00	$18.00
Printed flyers	One order (50 flyers)	$0.62 per flier	$31.00
Education.com annual subscription	1	$60.00	$60.00
Website hosting platform - Wix	3 months	$16.00	$48.00
Trifold			
	Cost Total:		$193.99

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