

# **Teachers' Beliefs and Sense of Responsibility for Student Learning: The Implications of Race, Class, and Context<sup>1</sup>**

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## Abstract

The research reported here demonstrates that the race and class composition of students in urban elementary schools conditions teachers' and administrators' assessments of students' abilities and shapes their sense of responsibility for student performance. Drawing on data from interviews and observations in five urban elementary schools, we demonstrate that when students are African American and low-income their educational deficits are emphasized and teachers reduce their sense of responsibility for student learning. In contrast, when students are middle-income, white, or Asian their assets are emphasized and teachers' sense of responsibility for student learning is increased. We further show that this process can be mediated in low-income African American schools when leaders engage in practices designed to enhance teachers' sense of responsibility for student learning.

One of the most consistent findings in sociological research is that family background is linked to children's educational outcomes, attainment, and adult occupational status (Blau and Duncan 1967; Coleman et al. 1966; Jencks et al. 1972; Orfield 1993). Data indicate that children from low-income families do less well in school than their more affluent counterparts and that African American children's educational attainment continues to lag behind that of whites (Kalmijin and Kraaykamp 1996; Farley and Allen 1989).

Understanding how race and class stratification of this type is perpetuated from one generation to the next has been an enduring problem in sociological research, and a major concern of reproduction theorists of education. Reproduction theorists have identified how structural forces such as the correspondence between work, family, and school environments (Bowles and Gintis 1976), cultural capital (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990; Lareau 1989; Heath 1983), the persistence of racial stratification (Ogbu 1978, 1994; Fordham and Ogbu 1986, Fordham 1996), and institutional practices such as tracking (Oakes 1985) and low teacher expectations (Roscigno 1998; Brophy and Good 1973; Rist 1970, 1977; Rosenthal and Jacobson 1968) shape student outcomes.<sup>1</sup> These theorists argue that all of these forces are implicated in passing on privilege to the children of the wealthy and cementing the disadvantages of students from less affluent families.

One line of argument in this tradition focuses on teachers' perceptions and expectations for student performance (Roscigno 1998; Ferguson, 1998a; Jussim, Eccles, and Madon 1996) Rist 1970, 1977; Rosenthal and Jacobson 1968). This work suggests that teachers' perceptions of low-income, Black, and female students' academic capacity are lower than those they hold for middle and upper income white male students (Farkas, et. al. 1990, 1996). This work also emphasizes the role of the "self-fulfilling prophecy" through which teachers' low expectations reduce students' self-image, cause them to exert less effort in school, and lead teachers themselves to give certain students less challenging coursework (Farkas et al. 1990, 1996; Rist 1973; Merton, 1948).

Though these studies have provided useful insights into the ways in which schools reproduce stratification, this literature does not explore the organizational embeddedness of teachers' assessments of students. In other words, while there is substantial work suggesting that school context may impact classroom reproductive processes (Roscigno, 2000, 1998; Bankston and Caldas 1996; Ayalon, 1994; Ogbu 1994; Kozol, 1991; Anyon, 1981; Bowles and Gintis, 1976), as it currently stands, this literature emphasizes interactions between individual teachers and their students, overlooking the role of school context in conditioning teachers' assessments of and behaviors toward students.

In this paper, we argue that there is a relationship between the student composition of schools, teachers' beliefs about students, and teachers' sense of responsibility for student performance. We show that teachers' beliefs about students are conditioned by the race and class composition of each school's student population, demonstrating that students' deficits are emphasized more often than their assets when students are African American and low-income while their assets are emphasized more often than their deficits when students are middle-income, white, or Asian. We further argue that teachers' reduce their sense of responsibility for student performance when students' deficits are emphasized. We conclude that as a result of this process the racial and social class composition of schools may have important implications for students' educational opportunities.

#### Race, Class, and Teacher Perceptions and Expectations of Students

Since the publication of *Pygmalion in the Classroom* (Rosenthal and Jacobson 1968), there has been extensive attention paid to teachers' beliefs about students and their implications for student outcomes. Several analysts have provided useful reviews of this work (Ferguson 1998a; Jussim, Eccles and Madon 1996; Good, 1981). Some research finds pervasive biases in teachers' perceptions and behaviors toward different groups of

students while others argue that there is significant accuracy and predictive ability in teachers' perceptions (Jussim, Eccles, and Madon 1996). While teachers' perceptions of student ability are heavily influenced by student performance, there is also substantial evidence that students' race and social class backgrounds also influence these assessments (Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999; Farkas 1996; Alexander et al. 1987). Moreover, the impacts of teachers' perceptions are greater for African American, female, and low-income students than for white male students (Ferguson, 1998a; Jussim, Eccles, and Madon, 1996). Jussim, et al. (1996) tested the effect of teachers' perceptions at the beginning of the school year on students' math test scores and grades at the end of the academic year. The effect of teachers' expectations was found to be three times as great for African American students than for other students (Ferguson 1998a).

Ferguson (1998a) offers two potential explanations for this finding. One suggests that teachers may be more rigid in their expectations for African American, female, and low-income students. In support of this view, Ferguson cites Taylor (1979) who finds that teachers treat white and black students differently. She finds that, when compared to whites, Black students get "briefer feedback after mistakes, ... less positive feedback after correct responses, ... and fewer helpful slips of the tongue" (Ferguson 1998a: 294). Taylor's findings are also confirmed by other studies in classroom settings.<sup>2</sup>

Second, such students may be more vulnerable to teachers' expectations. Ferguson cites Steele's (1992) work on "stereotype threat" and Mickelson's (1990) work on African American students' expectations and aspirations as potential clues to why this larger effect is found for African American students. Ferguson writes that:

Steele identifies a phenomenon he calls stereotype threat, and the resulting stereotype anxiety, that can affect members of any stigmatized group.

When the stereotype concerns ability, "threatened" individuals are anxious not to perform in ways that might corroborate the stereotype... One effect of this anxiety is "a disruptive apprehension" that can interfere with

performance.

Mickelson's work suggests that the opportunity structure (particularly the job ceiling affecting the employment opportunities and outcomes of African Americans) have a leveling effect on students' "concrete" aspirations. Thus, while their abstract beliefs about education and mobility reflect mainstream values, they may behave in ways that undermine mainstream success.

Therefore, regardless of the accuracy or inaccuracy of teachers' perceptions of student past performance, the implications of their beliefs and subsequent actions may detrimentally impact certain students more than others. In other words, once African American, female and low-income students are identified as having educational deficits, teachers' behavior towards them, students' responses to that behavior, or some combination of both may exacerbate the perceived deficit.

#### Teachers' Assessments and the Micro-Political Context of Schools

While this work focuses on teachers and students at the individual level, we suggest an alternative explanation that considers the context in which teachers' evaluations of students occur. Recent studies of cultural reproduction have emphasized the importance of examining school micro-political contexts and their implications for student outcomes (Roscigno et al. 1999; Lareau and Horvat 1999; Bourdieu 1977). Two related features of these micro-political contexts are teachers' evaluations of students' ability (Roscigno et al. 1999) and teachers' individual and collective sense of responsibility for students' learning (Lee and Loeb 2000, Lee and Smith 1996). Roscigno et al. (1999) suggest that the valuation of students' characteristics by teachers "is arguably the most proximate micro-political process with implications for returns to students' cultural-educational resources" (Roscigno et al. 1999: 164). They show that there is a differential reward for cultural capital based on race, with African American students' being rewarded less than their white

counterparts because of teachers' lower expectations for black students and race differences in track placement (Roscigno et al. 1999).

Lee and Smith (1996) argue that teachers' expectations can be studied at the organizational level through the analysis of their sense of collective responsibility for student learning. They demonstrate that students exhibit greater achievement gains when their schools are characterized by a high degree of collective responsibility for student learning and consistency in these beliefs among school staff. Lee and Loeb (2000) argue that with regard to collective responsibility schools exist on a continuum. On one end are schools where "teachers take personal responsibility for the success or failure of their own teaching ..."(Lee and Loeb 2000: 8). On the other end are schools where:

Most teachers see potential impediments between their own teaching and students' learning, namely, students ability (or lack of it), students family background, or their motivation. If students do not learn, these teachers would tend to locate the blame for low performance outside themselves and their own teaching (Lee and Loeb 2000: 8).

We argue that both of these features of the micro-political context – teachers expectations of students and their individual and collective sense of responsibility for student performance – may be influenced by the race and social class composition of schools. Research demonstrates that schools, particularly urban schools, remain highly segregated by race and social class (Cohen 2000; Orfield, Bachmeier, James, et al. 1997). If students' race and social class influence teachers' expectations and beliefs, then the implications of de facto segregation on teachers' beliefs *in general* may also be influenced by school context. More specifically, if teachers beliefs about students and their sense of responsibility for student learning are associated with the race and class composition of schools, this may undermine students learning opportunities. We argue that a schools micro-political context may be vulnerable to the composition of its students with the concentration of low-income African

American students resulting in a leveling of teachers' expectations and a reduction in teacher individual and collective sense of responsibility for student learning.

#### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data for this report is drawn from semi-structured interviews and observations conducted at five urban elementary schools.<sup>3</sup> Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of each school. While the basic school-level demographics reported in Table 1 are useful, factors such as family composition, parents' educational levels, and neighborhood income characteristics have all been shown to impact students' educational outcomes and attainment. In Table 2 we add census data on the neighborhood characteristics of the communities in which the schools are embedded in order to give more detail on school composition and characteristics.

[Insert tables 1 and 2 here]

The interviews were conducted primarily with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> (n=23) grade teachers at each school along with formal and informal school leaders.<sup>4</sup> In total, 51 teachers and administrators were interviewed. All of the interviews were conducted at the school and generally lasted between 30 and 90 minutes. The interviews were audio taped and transcribed.

Teacher interviews included general interviews and post-observation interviews. The general interviews sought to capture teachers' beliefs about instruction and their beliefs and expectations of students. The post-observation interviews addressed the same issues but were conducted by interviewers who had observed the teachers' classrooms and were therefore grounded in observations of actual teaching practices. Leader interviews were conducted with the principals and assistant principals at each school along with other formal and informal leaders identified by school employees. These interviews asked school leaders about their beliefs regarding instructional innovation as well as the students, their parents, and the school community.

Observations were conducted in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms during math, science, and literacy lessons, faculty meetings, professional development sessions, special school events, after school programs, and informal occasions during the school day including teachers' lunch and break periods.

### Sample Selection

While some research acknowledges the impact of race and class segregation on the institutional practices of schools as organizations (Roscigno 2000, 1998; Anyon 1981; Bowles and Gintis 1976; Ogbu 1994), the teacher expectations literature has most often focused on individual teachers, or interactions inside classrooms, paying less attention to the broader organizational context within which teachers beliefs and their interactions with students are embedded (Jussim, Eccles, and Madon 1996). However, the concentration of racial minorities and low-income students in highly segregated urban schools potentially conditions teacher expectations.

We argue that emphasizing teachers' and administrators' beliefs at a broader organizational level can help us better understand their impact when the student population is relatively homogenous as well as facilitate comparisons across schools. Therefore, we attempt to ascertain teachers' and administrators' beliefs about students moving beyond the classroom by interviewing a broader range of actors in each school and seeking to connect their beliefs to a broader organizational response to students. To do this, we focused on two grade levels – one lower elementary grade (2<sup>nd</sup>) and one upper elementary grade (5<sup>th</sup>). In addition, we interviewed both formal and informal leaders at these schools. We define formal leaders as those who hold formal positions such as principals, assistant principals, counselors, and curriculum coordinators. Informal leaders are those who emerge as leaders based on our interviews with teachers regarding those who influence their practices.

### Data Analysis

We analyzed our interview and observation data using the computer program NU\*DIST which is designed for qualitative data analysis and theorizing. We first

identified occasions when teachers' and administrators' expressed beliefs about children. We then coded their beliefs in terms of assets and deficits.<sup>5</sup> Responses were coded as asset oriented if they contained statements that highlighted students' strengths. Here we borrow from Farkas et al (1990, 1996), and other work in this tradition, by emphasizing teachers' *cognitive* and *non-cognitive* assessments of students.<sup>6</sup> Asset oriented non-cognitive assessments emphasized behavioral qualities such as maturity, responsibility, high work ethic, and the ability to work well with other students. Asset oriented cognitive assessments tended to focus on students' ability to read and compute at high levels, successfully engage in higher order thinking, master course material, and do well on standardized tests. Deficit oriented comments in this category typically suggested that students lacked these qualities and abilities. Teachers and administrators' non-cognitive assessments of students were further divided into three categories – schoolwork related (i.e. completion of homework), marginally schoolwork related (i.e. maturity, disruptiveness), and ascribed characteristics (i.e. race, class, sex). These categories were again borrowed from Farkas (1996).

Having coded the data from each school using this strategy, we then explored patterns at each school paying particular attention to the race and class composition of the student population. To create these categorizations we borrowed from the scheme used by the Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago.<sup>7</sup> Having identified the themes for each school, we then determined the nature of responses for each teacher/administrator that fit into each category, and aggregated this to the school level in order to make comparisons across individuals and the schools as a whole.

Finally, we distinguished between teachers' and administrators' perceptions of their students and their enactment of these perceptions (Weick, 1979). We were interested not only in what they believed about their students but how they acted on these beliefs. In particular, we sought explicit connections between beliefs and action both in interviews with teachers and administrators and in our observations of their actual practices. In the process of this analysis, we found that teachers' beliefs about students were connected to

their sense of responsibility, both individual and collective, for student performance. We therefore analyzed the data closely to explore the link between assessments of students and teachers' sense of responsibility for student performance. Finally, we were not simply interested in what individual teachers believed and did in isolation, but also explored how their actions were embedded in more widely held "organizational beliefs" and orientations toward students.

The organizational beliefs at a given school are tied to the individual beliefs of teachers and administrators, but are more than the sum of these beliefs. We are interested in a school-wide orientation towards the students at a given school, where the beliefs and responses toward the students do not depend on any individual. This depends on a certain number of people sharing similar beliefs in a school, but it also depends on what kind of people have these beliefs. When similar beliefs are distributed across people at different levels in the hierarchy and in different domains, we can speak of organizational beliefs. The more places that an orientation is re-enforced, the greater the evidence for organizational beliefs. Thus, we examine domains as various as the classroom practice of teachers, the professional development of leaders and the decorations of the hallway in a school for evidence of a shared orientation towards students. Therefore, we were interested in the beliefs and responses of individual teachers and leaders as well as schools as organizations.

## STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS AND BELIEFS ABOUT STUDENTS

The data suggest that the racial composition of schools, as well as students' social class backgrounds, relate to teachers' and administrators' general beliefs about students.<sup>2</sup> When we analyzed the data from the schools separately, we found that teachers' and administrators' beliefs about students varied by the schools' racial group composition. In the majority white and majority Asian schools 71% of teachers emphasized students' assets over their deficits compared to only 23% of the teachers in the African American schools. The social class composition of the African American schools seems to have been associated with teachers' assessments of students as well. In African American schools with 90% or higher low-income students only 10% of teachers emphasized students' assets, while in the African American school with 61% low-income students 66% of the teachers emphasized students' assets. Table 3. shows the relationship between teachers' assessments of students and the racial and social class composition of the schools.

[Insert table 3 about here]

In Lewis, an integrated school (majority white students) with “only” 64% low-income students,<sup>8</sup> the students were characterized as engaging in asset based behavior. At this school the students were characterized as “eager to learn,” “highly motivated,” “mature,” “eager to help others,” and “hard working.” All of the teachers in this school emphasized asset behaviors over deficits. In terms of their deficits, these tended to be tied to specific students rather than the general student population. Interestingly, the only cognitive deficits identified were language difficulties. We interpret this to refer to the rising Mexican-American student population at the school, which is a recent phenomenon but has

<sup>2</sup> We do not make claims regarding the accuracy or falsity of the teachers and administrators' perceptions. We argue that the composition of the schools is related to beliefs about students. This association, we will argue later, impacts teachers' sense of responsibility for student performance and therefore shapes the micro-political context of schools. There is substantial literature that is concerned with the accuracy and predictive ability of teachers' assessments but that is beyond the scope of this paper.

led to the rapid expansion of the schools bilingual program and was presented by the principal as one of the school's major challenges.

In Harris School, which is majority Asian and 84% low-income, the majority of teachers' comments about students emphasized cognitive and non-cognitive assets. The cognitive assets included "excellent math, reading, and science skills," and the ability to "catch on quickly." In terms of the non-cognitive assets, comments emphasized students' high levels of motivation, the limited number of discipline problems, students' hard work, and the prominence of educational values in Chinese culture. As the white female curriculum coordinator argued "as a culture, they [Chinese] so value education. That permeates the building to an extent." Notice how this comment attributes these values to Chinese culture as a whole, not a specific group of students. Some teachers did raise concerns about the students' capabilities; however, these comments tended to be statements about specific students. For example, a white female upper grade science teacher argued that certain students lack motivation and have difficulty focusing, while a white female 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher argued that the students who are slower (a small number of students) slow the other children down. Overall, however, teachers and administrators assess students favorably at this school.

At Davis School, which is 100% African American and 61% low-income, all of the teachers' comments were asset oriented with the exception of the principal, who was concerned that students demonstrated a lack of respect for adult authority at times. Teachers argued that students presented no major behavioral problems, that they were respectful of adults, and generally "good kids". One African American female 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher did raise challenges faced by students, which included making too much noise and lacking focus, however, such feelings were expressed in the context of statements like "these are really good kids compared to students at other schools." Likewise, while one teacher raised concerns about students' cognitive ability, she did so in the context of a more positive general assessment. This African American female 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher stated that her students

sometimes had trouble visualizing in science and reading but added that “ I have a lot of good readers and very good math students. They're really, really high up there.”

In contrast to these three schools, Evans School, which is 100% African American and 90% low-income was characterized by a more deficit-oriented beliefs about students. Of the eight teachers and school leaders interviewed, six emphasized students' deficits more than their assets. Most of these comments focused on non-cognitive attributes and were only marginally related to academic performance. At this school, teachers argued that students were “disrespectful,” “lacked discipline,” and were “too social.” Other comments emphasized more performance oriented non-cognitive attributes like students having trouble focusing and failing to adequately complete course work. However, even though many comments were deficit-oriented, two teachers and one administrator emphasized students' assets. For example, the white male assistant principal argued that the students are adept at using computers and understanding technology and that the students presented no major behavioral problems. Other asset oriented comments were what can best be described as qualified compliments. For example, the school's African American male technology coordinator argued that:

I worked at the Jail. I worked at the juvenile detention center. So, I just had the opportunity to be exposed to all types of kids, and all types of environments. And, it's really given me the edge, because you can't tell me, when you're talking about kids, that [this school] has the worst kids, when I've been to juvenile detention centers and the jails. You don't have the worst kids. They're not the worst kids. Matter of fact, there's some pretty good kids.

His comments, while suggesting that the kids are “good,” use young criminal offenders as the reference point. This is clearly not a ringing endorsement of the students' behavior. Others in this school discussed students who possessed assets as exceptions to broader patterns. A white female 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher talks about two students in her

class whom posses strong cognitive skills. She argues:

Well there's a boy who's probably the smartest kid in the class. I mean, he's so smart. He's got so much outside knowledge that most of the kids don't have. He's so bright, I mean - he gets it. I say one thing, I read one thing - he remembers that word. He's got just like a memory that's incredible, and he just easily picks up concepts. And, I have a girl, who's really intelligent. . . . The one's that are brighter, I have to say, seem to come from these really tighter families and more support with the education through the parents that I know.

Again, while the teacher distinguishes these students' assets, they are constructed more as an exception than the rule. This is in contrast to the first three schools where students' assets were emphasized and their deficits were more often seen as exceptions.

Finally, Adams school, was the most deficit oriented of the schools in terms of teachers and administrators beliefs about students, particularly their family backgrounds. Teachers and administrators believe that the students' family environments and neighborhood contexts, along with the presence of drugs and gang violence, all contribute to them coming to school somewhat unprepared or unable to focus. Some major themes in the teachers and administrators beliefs about children are reflected below.

These kids are hard core inner city. Parent involvement is a joke. I have some great parents. Out of 30 kids I'd say I have ten living with a grandparent or foster parent and twenty living with their mother. I think I only have one living with both parents. And those numbers are consistent with my class last year. Most of the boys have no male figure in their lives. It's really sad.

-White female 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher

R: Then there's the crack kids. I mean some of our kids are drug babies

and you can tell. Like ---- for instance. His mother was doing crack when he was still inside her.

I: You can tell?

R: Yeah, you can. He can't stop moving. He's always up and around. And that's why he just can't follow all the time."

-White female 2<sup>nd</sup> teacher

The students go around thinking that things can't get any better or any different than they are now. No one in their family has an education; no one is leaving the neighborhood. Sometimes people here are just existing, not living. This limits their ability in school.

- Black female school counselor

Almost none of the teachers' and administrators' comments focused on students' assets. Instead, this school was focused on students' challenges rather than assets. This pattern was pervasive at the low-income African American schools. Of the eleven teachers and administrators in these two African American schools who reported beliefs about students, only 2 emphasized students' assets. From this data, there seems to be an association between the concentration of low-income African American students and teachers' assessments of those students' abilities. For African American students social class also influenced this association. In the middle income African American school, teachers were much more favorable in their assessments of students. While it is difficult to disentangle the relationship between race and class here, these patterns were striking and warrant further examination which is beyond the scope of this paper.

Teachers' Perceptions of Students and Responsibility for Student Learning

Simply identifying the beliefs held by teachers and administrators tells us little about the impact that those beliefs may have on teachers' instructional practices or on the students themselves. Much of the literature suggests a correspondence between what teachers believe about students and how they treat them. However, teachers' beliefs are most significant when they shape their interactions with students at the individual and organizational levels. The basic argument in the teacher expectation literature is that low expectations for students translate into instructional practices that ultimately contribute to social reproduction. For example, Good (1981) summarizes findings demonstrating that high and low-achieving students are treated differently by teachers, with low-achievers receiving less attention, being seated further from the teacher, getting less demanding work, getting less teacher support in failure situations, and getting less time to answer questions.<sup>9</sup>

While most of this work focuses on individual teachers and classrooms, we argue that these beliefs and practices are embedded in micro-political contexts that can influence teachers thinking and actions. In particular, we were interested in how teachers' sense of responsibility for student performance might have been tied to their beliefs about students. Prior research suggests that teachers' sense of responsibility for students' performance may be reduced when students' family backgrounds and motivation are viewed by teachers as barriers (Lee et al. 2000). We sought to determine whether discernable patterns in teachers' sense of responsibility existed among teachers in the same schools. In particular we were interested in the extent to which teachers encouraged student effort and adjusted their instructional practices to meet the needs of students that they perceived as having deficits. As stated above, Lee et al (2000) argue that schools exist on a continuum with some school possessing a high level of collective responsibility for student performance and others emphasizing how impediments like students lack of ability, family background, and motivation inhibit their instructional practices having the desired impact.

Our data suggest that teachers' responses to perceived student deficits did fit into the two categories outlined by Lee and her colleagues. At Lewis, Harris, Davis schools teachers' responses to students reflected a strong sense of responsibility for student performance. Teachers adjusted their instructional practices to meet the needs of students who faced challenges. In these schools, teachers' behaviors reflected the belief that student potential could be developed through the hard work of teachers and students.

At Evans School, teachers tended to feel that students' family backgrounds limited teachers' ability to effectively teach them. Instead, some teachers believed that students were incapable of doing challenging work and this reduced teachers' sense of responsibility for students' performance. In this school, teachers' comments often tied students' ability to family background and placed the "blame" for behavioral difficulties and classroom problems on students. This led four teachers to resist instructional innovation, avoid the use of manipulative in math and science instruction, and emphasize basic skills to the exclusion of more advanced applications of knowledge. Teachers' also presented students with less challenging course work because they feared they were not capable of handling it.

Finally, at Adams School while teachers and administrators acknowledged student deficits, but with regard to sense of responsibility, they followed a pattern that was similar to Lewis, Harris, and Davis schools. As we will discuss later, leaders at this school have worked to enhance teachers' sense of collective responsibility for student performance. Therefore, the association between beliefs about students and sense of responsibility for student performance at this school seemed to be mediated by organizational practices. We discuss these patterns in the following section.

At Lewis school, teachers seek to address perceived student challenges directly and creatively. Their actions suggest that they believe students' challenges can be overcome and they take responsibility for providing students with learning opportunities. For example, a Hispanic 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at this school, discusses the use of "literature circles" to address students challenges with reading.

I have been thinking about doing more ... literature circles where I can pick out books for them to choose from that are more to their level and concentrate with, on those books with those students [who are having difficulty]. So I'm looking into that right now, at the literature circles, how I would design that.

The same teacher seeks to reassure the schools growing Mexican American population that they can do the work, even if they face challenges around language. As she states:

We meet the challenges as they occur. Mainly it's trying to keep the child positive. We explain to them ... try and get the child understand that we are trying to help them and that we want them to learn but it's going to be a little difficult but we're going to keep on working until we are successful.

This teacher's comment demonstrates an expectation that encouraging students can help them achieve academically. The linguistic deficit identified by this teacher is seen as something that can be addressed through encouragement and changes in her instructional practices.

Another teacher (eighth grade white female) tries to find ways to get students excited about math and science.

I guess I approach all of my teaching kind of in the same way.

It's that a lot of times you get, by the time the kids get to eighth grade they're turned off with school and I try to turn them back on. So

... I try and get them to like mathematics and I try to get them to think scientifically. So, I guess I approach everything like "how would the kids see this" and try to make it exciting for them.

Again, the emphasis here is on her changing her instructional practices to meet students' needs. While students' lack of motivation is seen as raising a challenge for instruction, this teacher responds by attempting to make instruction more meaningful and interesting for students. In both of these cases, teachers take personal responsibility for students'

educational opportunities. This approach is similar to what can be found among teachers at Harris School.

At Harris, a white female upper-grade teacher responds to students with learning disabilities and challenges in reading as follows.

Some have reading deficits that make it difficult. They have trouble reading directions and things like that. Some need verbal directions, [they are] learning disabled where they absolutely need that. So consequently, [when giving directions] ... I usually ... verbally tell them, supply them with written directions, have them read it and model it.

A white female intermediate science teacher at Harris explains how she deals with students who have had difficulty with mathematics concepts.

So when you're dealing with math concepts, because I do middle grades, you've already got kids who have run up against failure. You've already got kids who have or are beginning to create an identity of failure. I'm back-dooring Math through Science. I love telling them about Einstein. Bad mathematician, learned enough to do brilliant Physics. Learn what you need to do what you love. It's all you've got to do. Sometimes if you can remove the difficulty, if you can demystify, and if you can take it, enter it through something they find interesting then it's not, it doesn't set up those automatic, "I can't do this. I can't do this. I can't do this. No, I'm stupid."

This teacher demonstrates a proactive response to student challenges. This approach was characteristic of teachers' responses at this school. The general pattern is for teachers to address perceived deficits directly and to reassure students that they are capable of doing the work. At Harris, teachers take responsibility for addressing students' challenges.

Finally, at Davis School, teachers also adjust instructional practices to meet the needs of students who face challenges. An African American female 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher

explains that while her students are good readers and very good at math, some have trouble visualizing in science and in reading. She explains her response to this challenge while reflecting on a lesson.

I was doing a science project with the kids and I realized that some of them weren't getting it and I just kind of stood there, I'm like, to me it was a simple concept that a second grader should be able to get. So I just stopped and I turned around and I did an overhead so they could actually visualize what was going on and when I did that all the kids got it.

This teacher adjusts her instructional practices to meet the needs of her students. She identifies a deficit – challenges with visualizing – and addresses these challenges directly. Her response reflects her own responsibility for students learning.

Another teacher at Davis School, an African American 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade science teacher, says that she has to address pacing issues with some students who have a difficult time keeping up.

Some of them you really have to change your teaching style for them. ... I do give them additional time. ... Last year I had them (a good thing about fifth and sixth grade is that I see them for two years). So the one [boy] I had last year only for science, I'm like, "he's not getting this." His scores are low. He's not completing anything. [Now] I've got him this year in my homeroom I realize he just needs extra time because he's doing really well. He's getting As, Bs and Cs, where before he and Ds and Fs from me. ... what I did was I went and told his other teacher. I said, you know what, he needs extra time. He's going to finish his work but he going to ask you separate questions and he's going to require additional time. And it really works for him.

This teacher responds to this student's needs directly, taking responsibility for adjusting her instructional practices to meet the needs of this student. In addition, she communicates

her knowledge about this student to his other teacher, encouraging her to address the students needs in similar ways.

At Lewis, Harris, and Davis schools, teachers' responses to students they perceive as having challenges reflect a sense of responsibility for students' educational outcomes. They seek to encourage students, push them to excel, and adjust their instructional practices to meet students' needs. We argue that these responses to students' challenges suggest that teachers take responsibility for student outcomes.

In contrast to these schools, at Evans School, teachers and administrators seemed fixated on challenges and used these to explain their inability to effectively work with certain students. At this school, teachers' emphasized students' deficits and their beliefs about students led them to engage in certain instructional practices. Some teachers in this school reported that they evaluated student work less critically, gave students less challenging work, resisted innovation, and emphasized highly structured classroom work. We argue that these responses demonstrate a reduced sense of responsibility for student performance at this school when compared to the schools discussed above. Below we connect teachers' beliefs about students to several specific instructional practices.

At Evans School, teachers' beliefs about students were often transferred into specific responses. Some teachers claim to evaluate students' work less critically because of their perceptions of students limited capacity. A white female art teacher shared in an informal conversation that she evaluates her students work less critically than she would "in a suburban school" because the students face more challenges and need to feel a sense of accomplishment. This suggests a leveling of expectations for performance based on perceived deficits and a reduction in her sense of responsibility for student outcomes because she believes they lack educational resources.

A white male 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher demonstrates his low expectations for his students during a classroom observation. The researcher notes how the teacher seemed to water down the curriculum and not challenge students. Not only did the math problems he

assigned seem very simple, emphasizing only mathematical procedures; the teacher walked the students through the problems, spoon feeding them the correct answers.

Throughout the lesson, Mr. \_\_\_\_ guides students to the correct answers.

One problem involved adding two numbers together and then subtracting the sum from a third number.

T: "What operation do we need first?"

S: "Multiplication?"

T: "No....What do we do first (as he draws plus sign on the board)?"

S: "Addition?"

T: "Right (adding two numbers together himself)...now what do we do?"

S: "Subtract?"

T: "Right (putting the subtraction on the board)."

Here, the teacher does not challenge the students by giving them the opportunity to reflect on the problem and reach an answer but instead quickly gives them the right answer. Good (1981) argues that this is typical behavior for teachers with low expectations for their students. They often provide limited wait time for low-achievers in their classrooms.

In addition to uncritical assessment of students' work, teachers at Evans were reluctant to try "new things" because they feared that students would not be able to handle more innovative practices. For example, an African American female 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher explains why she does not use manipulatives in science and math.

The behavior of the children does not lend itself there. When I try and use cubes. We use cubes for counting and figuring out stuff. They stack them. They're making this with them. They're making that with them. They're not doing what should be being done with them.

Because of her experiences and beliefs about student behavior this teacher does not attempt more innovative instructional practices with her students. When asked to speculate about why her students have trouble with this type of work, she ties students' inability to

successfully respond to these practices to their home environments and their family backgrounds. As she stated in a grade level meeting:

[Many of the students are] simply not ready for school. Some of the children are not socialized for school. They don't have to come until they are seven years old. Where I'm from ... they have to come earlier to school. But it starts at home. If they are walking around all day running around crazy watching TV, or walking up and down the street with their parents eating potato chips they are not going to be ready for school.

This teacher's comments reflect a belief that students lack the ability to be successful in her classroom. They suggest that factors other than her teaching strategies are most critical to students' outcomes. Because of this focus, she does not seek to change her practices but emphasizes students' deficits as barriers to instructional innovation and student learning.

The fifth grade teacher discussed above emphasizes seatwork and reading from textbooks rather than doing experiments in science because he argues that his students cannot do more independent work. He argues that they "lack maturity," "don't respect the school," and "don't value education." He has stopped doing hands on projects and experiments in science because he feels it is a waste of time.

I have found that as much structure as possible will at least will hold the students on the topic, what it is we're talking about. Because if we loosen up at all they tend to go in many different directions and I can't assume anything. I can't assume that they really know what they are doing or why they are doing it. I found that it is a waste of time [to do experiments]. We did one with red food color and there was red food coloring everywhere. And it got to the point that it was much ado about nothing. We wasted a lot of time and yet they did not understand the concepts. So I've found that if I can get them to stay together in a paragraph and follow through on that paragraph with terminology and main ideas ... at least I know that they've

heard it and familiar with what the words are.

Thus, because of disciplinary problems and classroom management issues, the students are not exposed to experiments in science, and instead only get exposed to science “terminology and main ideas.” As with the 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher discussed above, he also claims that using manipulatives with these students does not work because:

I have not been able to control the students’ manipulation of the materials. I will say please don't spill this on the desk or the floor but I might as well be whistling Dixie because its beyond them to control materials, it just ends up everywhere.

His comments that it is “beyond them to control materials” suggests that he believe the students’ behaviors are fixed and unlikely to change. Interestingly, while none of these behaviors point to the students’ cognitive capacity, they effect his instructional practices and thus the rigor of the work to which students are exposed. His comments also suggest that he believes there is little he can do to address these issues instructionally.

This teacher believes that the disciplinary problems he experiences in the classroom are tied to the students’ “lack the maturity and responsibility . . . they have no respect for the school.” According to this teacher, these characteristics can be tied to students’ home environments. As he states:

Well what's expected of them as far as their futures, that's a learned behavior from home. If the parents don't talk about graduating from high school, then the student doesn't see it as significant. If the parents don't talk about a career, what you want to do someday, and see that's something to think about, that type of home influence is what I'm talking about.

Therefore, his response to these students is to expect less of them and to teach them what he can given their limited capacity. Tying their behavior and ability to the home environment also takes the onus for addressing students’ deficits off of the students and

himself and places it on the parents whom he claims have a limited appreciation for the importance of education and pass these beliefs on to their children.

The schools' other fifth grade teacher also seems wedded to "traditional" instructional approaches. The following fieldnote captures one researcher's impressions of an African American female 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers' general instructional orientation after a classroom observation.

Her overall teaching style was fairly traditional. She believes in teaching the basics she tells me because "that's what these kids need."

Teaching the "basics" is not problematic in and of itself, however, in the absence of combining the basics with more advanced instruction; students may be affected in ways that many reformers see as negative. Moreover, when this teacher talks about "these kids" we see an implicit assumption that students with different characteristics might be better suited to other forms of instruction. After further conversation with the researcher, this teacher explained her instructional practices were much the same as they had been for years and that she saw no real reason to innovate. Her comments reflect her lack of control and responsibility for what happens in her classroom. Instead, as is the case with other teachers in this school, responsibility is tied to the children and their families rather than to the teachers.

### Responsive Teachers

While five of the seven teachers who had explicit comments about students and instructional practices matched the patterns we discussed above. Two teachers seemed more responsive to students, sought to address students' challenges directly, and took more responsibility for student learning. For example, a white female 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher explains how she works with students who exhibit reading problems.

There are about three kids who couldn't read at all. ... So, they were really

behind and I really spent time with those kids and they're all reading now. .

. . They're still lower than the other kids, but they can read now.

And I've basically, like when we'd write in the journals in the morning,

I'd let them come to me, I would write it - they would dictate it to me.

I would write it, they'd read it back to me, and then they would copy it.

That was helping. I was giving them extra phonics work ... I would work

with those kids, have them read to me I mean, whenever I could get a

moment.

While this teacher and one other teacher took responsibility for student challenges and learning, when compared to Lewis, Harris, and Davis Schools teachers at Evans School were less proactive in addressing perceived student deficits. They saw them as less changeable through effort and hard work and seemed resigned to the fact their students had limited ability and that there was little they, as teachers, could do to insure that students learned.

#### Adams School

The patterns identified in these schools suggest that teachers' perceptions of students are tied to their sense of responsibility for student learning. In schools where the majority of the students were White, Asian and middle-income African Americans, teachers maintained a higher sense of responsibility for student performance than in Evans school where most of the children were low-income and African American. We argue that lower expectations lead to reduced sense of responsibility on the part of teachers. This micro-political process likely helps create and reinforce educational differences between race and class groups. The encouragement found in Lewis, Harris, and Davis Schools seem more likely to lead to higher levels of student performance than the responses found at Evans. However, our analysis of Adams school unearthed a different pattern. Low-income African American students populate Adams school, and teachers emphasized students' challenges

over their assets. Nonetheless, teachers' responses did not indicate a decrease in their sense of responsibility for students' outcomes. Instead, while students' challenges were recognized teachers' sense of responsibility remained high. We argue that at this school, organizational context mediates the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their sense of responsibility for student learning.

At Evans school, teachers' and administrators' beliefs about students emphasized their deficits and they tended to lower their sense of responsibility for student learning. In contrast, Adams teachers and administrators felt that the challenges faced by students were surmountable through hard work and effort on the part of teachers, school leaders, and the students themselves. Adams' is characterized by a high sense of responsibility for student learning on the part of teachers and administrators. This is reflected throughout the school community from administrators to teachers. The primary themes expressed by teachers and administrators at this school emphasized high standards, hard work and effort, and meeting the needs of the students.

While acknowledged, the circumstances of children's lives are not used as an excuse to reduce standards or alleviate teachers' responsibility for student learning. The African American Assistant Principal (a former classroom teacher at this school) argued this very clearly:

I don't allow anyone to say to me 'because he's this, because he's that, because he's the other he can't do it.' The reason for that is you could have been talking about me, when I was that age. I know given time, resources, and proper teaching I can get it. I believe...we use to have it posted, if he didn't learn it, you have not found a way to teach it.

Likewise, while recognizing that the students' face challenges, the principal argues that teachers and administrators must respond to the students' needs regardless of their circumstances.

It would be ideal if all of our kids came to you ready to move on to the

material that you would like to teach them but number one that's not going to happen... In terms of who comes into our classrooms, I don't know who's coming in. *All we can do is tailor our curriculum program to the students we get...* You have to think about how you need to spend your time to reach *these children*. (Italics added)

Administrators as well as teachers repeated this theme of high standards regardless of students' circumstances. As one teacher indicated:

She [the principal] says that, yes this is an inner city school and the kids do live in poverty, but she doesn't let you feel sorry for yourself. She gives you a kick in the pants and sometimes you need that.

Therefore the sense of responsibility is instilled in teachers through both the recognition of students' challenges and a push for addressing students' needs. This demonstrates a complex relationship in which the recognition of challenges enhances commitment rather than undermining it.

Another theme that was emphasized was that teachers and administrators prided themselves on hard work. As the following field note suggests:

Other staff members echo this idea of hard work. It seems to be part of the collective identity of the school community. They seem to take pride in their identities as 'hard workers.'

Again, this ethos of hard work is recognized and spoken to by school staff and modeled by the school principal. Another teacher argued that the administration expects hard work from the staff:

This is not a place to work if you don't want to work hard. The principal will not ask you to do anything that she will not do herself. She's the hardest working woman I've ever seen.

The guidance counselor makes a similar comment arguing that “a lot of teachers stay late and come early here. You’ll find that if you come at 8:15 am, there are no parking spaces left.”

Parents also recognize the hard work and commitment to students on the part of the teachers and administrators. As one parent stated:

Teachers take more time with the kids here, they show they care. They get the parents involved and show they care. I know the teachers here work hard.

Related to this is the position that the school’s employees have an obligation to meet the needs of the students. As one African American female teacher explained:

Teachers feel that if they do something and it does not work the first time, they feel that they should go back to the drawing board and look at why it did not work, and they try to impart that same type of feeling to the children.

The explicitly stated beliefs of teachers and administrators emphasize collective responsibility for student performance regardless of students’ social class or racial backgrounds. While sense of responsibility was reflected in interviews, it was also evident in observations, which revealed that organizational structures created by school leaders helped establish and reinforce teachers’ sense of responsibility for instructional improvement.

Organizational structures also contribute to the development of this sense of responsibility. One such structure, the Breakfast Club, was begun in 1995 to provide teachers the opportunity to reflect on their practice using educational research as the foundation for their discussions. In these meetings, teachers lead discussions drawing on articles related to their classroom practices and administrators provide breakfast including pancakes, eggs, and bacon. These meetings provided the site for connecting professional community, professional development (particularly in literacy instruction), and the improvement of student learning and heightened teachers sense of individual and collective responsibility for student learning (Halverson, Brown and Zoltners 2001). Using similar

ideas, the middle-school teachers (grades 5-8) developed “Teacher Talk” as another model of professional development. These sessions were structured much like the Breakfast Club meetings but focused on adolescent development and the creation of a supportive social environment for students (Halverson et al. 2001).

Observations of these meeting demonstrate that they were substantive in content and that teachers actively grappled with difficult issues regarding student achievement. After attending one Breakfast Club meeting, a researcher wrote the following fieldnote:

I am really impressed by the fact that some teachers ... read the article.

They were ... engaging in a three-way (at least) discussion about the issues that were brought up by the piece.

Teachers in other school contexts also drew on the literature to gain insights into their work with the children. Meetings were infused with statements like, “Let me share the key findings gleaned from this survey about inclusion” and “We know our students are having more problems at home because of the results of the latest study...” These comments generally reflected a proactive stance toward student learning that demonstrated a high degree of responsibility for students’ outcomes felt by the teachers.

Finally, in addition to these professional development sessions and the themes that emerged from teachers and administrators talk about students, the school artifacts also reflected high expectations for students. For example, Adams hallways demonstrate the staffs’ concerted effort to create a welcoming environment that highlights African American accomplishments. When the site researcher entered Adams, she noticed the positive affirmations about school success everywhere. The walls reflect the general orientation of the schools’ employees toward challenging students as the following field note conveys

The first things I noticed were the decorations and signs all over the walls.

They said, “Character is who you are and what you hope to be” and “Kids first” and “Honesty and Truthfulness” and “Team-Together Everyone Achieves More.” Down one hallway hung banners with a variety of values

written on them: honesty, respect, etc. [All of these signs struck me as extremely infused with empowerment values, self-responsibility, perseverance and success].

These school images were also infused with positive affirmations about African American culture and the accomplishments of prominent African Americans. The schools' African American Studies Coordinator argues that the intent behind this is to demonstrate a respect for the culture of the schools' students and encourage high achievement among them.

Therefore, teachers' sense of responsibility at Adams is reflected in their talk about classroom practices, the organizational structure such as the Breakfast Club and professional development meetings, and in organizational artifacts like banners and wall hangings. Much of the work of school leaders was geared toward increasing teachers' sense of responsibility for students' outcomes even while acknowledging some of the challenges students' face. This seems to be a direct effort to combat the micro-political process identified at Evans School. Therefore we argue that organizational context can have a mediating effect on the relationship between teachers' beliefs about students and teachers sense of responsibility for student learning.

#### CONCLUSION

Research on reproduction through teacher expectations offers considerable insight into how race and social class impact students educational outcomes. Most of this work, however, focuses on individual interactions between teachers and students and pays less attention to the potential role of school context in conditioning teachers' beliefs and actions. In response, we specified how the race and class composition of schools may condition teachers perceptions of students and how these perceptions might impact teachers sense of responsibility for student learning. Drawing on work from Bourdieu (1977), Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell (1999), and Lamont and Lareau (1988), we suggested that school

micro-political contexts – particularly teacher expectations and sense of responsibility for student learning – may be influenced by school race and class composition.

Our data demonstrate that the race and social class composition of the student population patterned teachers' beliefs about students. Because we do not analyze teacher/student interaction across all of our schools our analysis does not allow us to isolate or disentangle teacher bias from evaluation based on student performance. However, our data do demonstrate that the micro-political context of teacher evaluation at schools serving low-income African American students is distinct from that found in more affluent Black and white schools and the one low-income Asian school we studied. When students are majority African American and low-income, teachers hold more deficit oriented beliefs about them than when they are majority Caucasian, Asian, or when a higher percentage come from middle-income families.

Our data further demonstrate that teachers' sense of responsibility for student learning is higher in contexts where they see students as possessing more resources. In the schools where teachers emphasize students' assets, they express more responsibility for students' educational outcomes. In contrast, when students' deficits are emphasized, teachers see students' lack of motivation, family background, and limited skills as blocking their ability to effectively teach them.

The final school, Adams, did not follow this pattern. While teachers at this school emphasized students' deficits, school leaders have for several years engaged in practices designed to increase teachers' sense of responsibility for student outcomes. Therefore, despite the emphasis on deficits, teachers and administrators at this school expressed a high degree of responsibility for student outcomes. We argue that in this case organizational practices mediated the processes identified at the other four schools.

Prior work demonstrates that the micro-political context of teacher evaluation of students is critical to understanding the implications of family background for student outcomes. The work presented here extends this argument by demonstrating that school

micro-political context are influenced by the broader school composition. The reduction of teachers' expectations and sense of responsibility for student learning in low-income African American schools suggests a process through which de facto segregation contributes to a perpetuation of educational disadvantage.

Most reproduction theories view schools and their employees as the “agents of the system” with individual actions and organizational processes being determined by the demands of broader structures of domination (Carlson, 1996). However, in emphasizing the role of schools as reproductive sites, these theorists often fail to see how some school employees exhibit agency in the context of broader processes of social reproduction and how schools organizations might at times respond to similar conditions in distinct ways (Carson, 1996). Drawing on the work of Gramsci, and similar to Bourdieu, Apple (1995) argues that institutions such as schools exhibit relative autonomy from the larger systems of domination within which they are embedded. He writes:

‘Superstructural’ institutions such as schools have a significant degree of relative autonomy. The economic structure cannot insure any simple correspondence between itself and these institutions. However, such institutions, with the school among them, perform vital functions in the recreation of the conditions for ideological hegemony to be maintained. These conditions are not imposed, though. They are and need to be continuously rebuilt on the field of institutions like the school . . . Above all, hegemony doesn’t simply come about; it must be worked for in particular sites like the family, the workplace, the political sphere and the school (Apple, 1995: 15-16).

What is of particular interest here is that relative autonomy exists inside *schools*, that school employees can *engage in actions* that facilitate continued relations of domination. This passage suggests that school employees do work that advances the interests of the economic elite. As many reproduction theorists aptly point out, the structure

of institutions such as schools and the practices of their employees often reproduce stratification. However, the possibility for transformative practice on the part of teachers, administrators, and schools as institutions is embedded in this seemingly pessimistic observation. Because of the relative autonomy of educational institutions, school employees are not bound by the demands of race and class domination to blindly recreate stratification. Instead, they maintain some degree of autonomy and can make choices regarding how they carry on their work. As the case of Adams demonstrates, school practices and individual actions can intervene to challenge reproductive processes. While we seek to highlight this exception and view it with some optimism, we argue that the reproductive forces that are demonstrated in the other schools are powerful and difficult to challenge.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Resistance theory, which arose out of concern over the structural determinism of theories of reproduction, demonstrates how students respond to structural forces by rejecting the schools' achievement ideology (Willis 1977; Fordham and Ogbu 1986), adopting alternative mobility strategies (Ogbu 1978), lowering aspirations for success (MacLeod 1995), forging oppositional cultures (Solomon 1992), and otherwise resisting domination (Giroux 1983; Apple 1995; Willis 1977).

<sup>2</sup> For a summary of some of this work see Brophy and Good, 1974 and Good, 1981.

<sup>3</sup> Table 1 reports student demographics for each school.

<sup>4</sup> Formal school leaders are identified as those who hold officially defined leadership positions in schools (principals, assistant principals, curriculum coordinators, etc.). Informal leaders were identified through interviews as those who influence the practices of other organizational members. These included six classroom teachers.

<sup>5</sup> We also included a category for neutral comments, which were descriptive statements, which did not include evaluative judgements.

<sup>6</sup> Again borrowing from Farkas, Non-Cognitive assessments were further divided in three categories. First, there were non-cognitive assessments that are tied to academic performance such as work habits and completion of homework. Second there were behaviors less directly tied to achievement such as disruptive behavior. Finally, there were assessments that seemed unconnected to achievement such as membership in race, class, and gender social groups.

<sup>7</sup> For racial group membership, we used the following categories. Integrated schools were those with more than 30% white students. Black schools were schools with 85% or more Black students. Minority schools have 70% or more students who represent mixed-minority statuses. We adapt this slightly in the case of our majority Asian school that we refer to as Asian rather than minority. Finally, mixed schools have 15-30% white students. With regard to social class, we created four categories. The first was schools with 50% or fewer students who receive free/reduced lunch, the second category was 50-70% low-income, the third was 70-90% low-income and the final category contained schools with 90% or more students who receive free or reduced lunch.

<sup>8</sup> This is a low percentage for this district where the average percentage of low-income students is 84%.

<sup>9</sup> Actually, Good offers 12 major points detailing how highs and lows are treated differently by teachers. We have outlined only some of these above.