

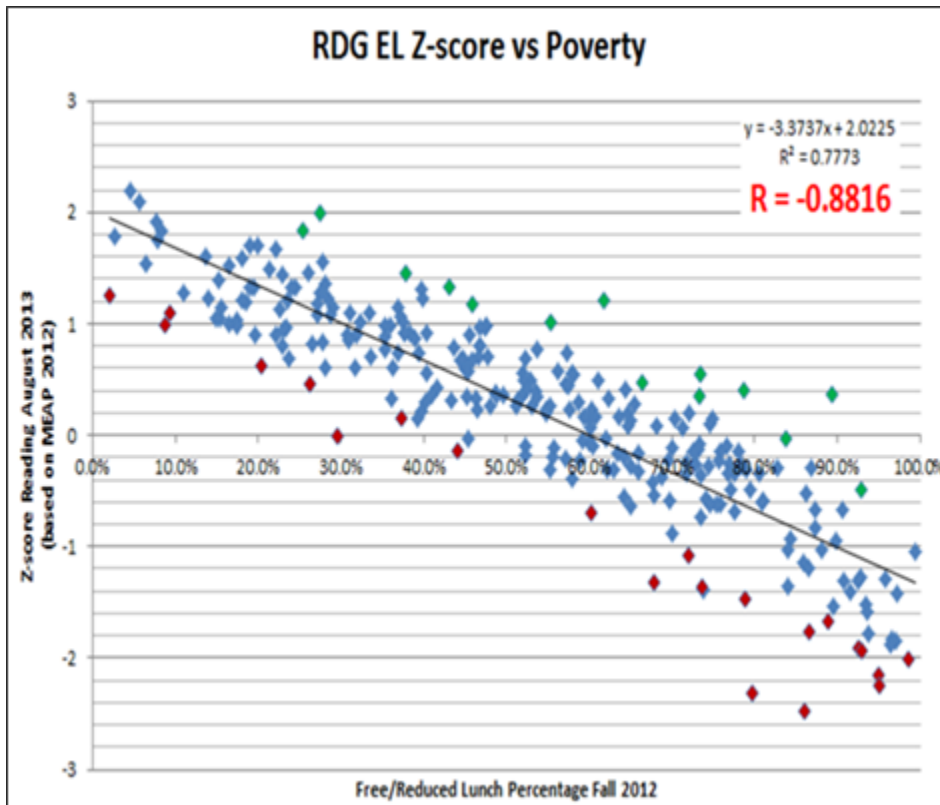
From: Gantert, Tom E.
Sent: Sunday, March 27, 2016 4:34 PM
To: Gantert, Tom E. <Gantert@mackinac.org>
Subject: RE: I'm Tom Gantert. I'm a reporter.

From: Brian Davis Ph.D. [<mailto:bdavis@hollandpublicschools.org>]
Sent: Friday, March 25, 2016 3:34 PM

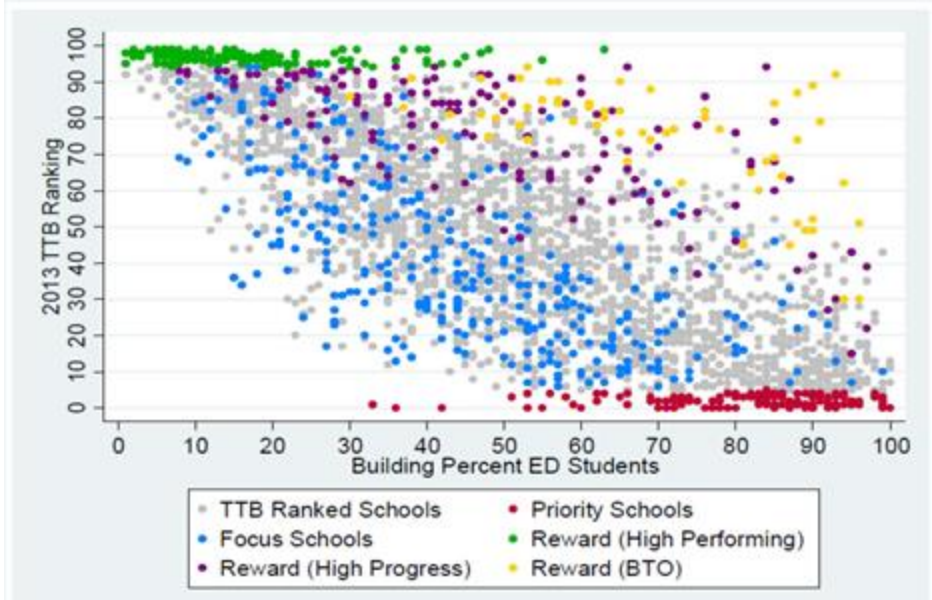
Tom,

Thank you for reaching out to me. The article in the Holland Sentinel has certainly sparked a lot of dialogue from radio shows to editorials.

The research is clear, poverty does matter. The research literature clearly supports this notion. Locally, in Region 3 of the state including Ottawa County, we plotted third grade reading proficiency against free/reduced lunch rate for student performance on the MEAP. There was a .8816 correlation between third grade proficiency and poverty. This is pretty significant considering 1.0 is a perfect correlation.



In 2013, the Top To Bottom Rankings were plotted. There is a similar trend line.



The Middle Cities Education Association recently commissioned a report by Public Policy Associates Incorporated. They substantiated the fact that poverty matters. They specifically looked at it from the angle of resources and school funding. In Michigan, 6%-16% less funding is going to schools most in need, compared to more affluent schools. Poverty exerts a multifaceted influence on child development from birth onward. Furthermore when poverty is concentrated among individual schools and school districts, it often affects the resources and conditions within schools.

So to answer your question directly, yes, the factors of poverty should be taken into consideration when the state determines the academic successes of schools. Rest assured though, poverty should never be used as an excuse. We need to continue with high levels of academic rigor with high levels of support. But, given the way in which schools are funded today, the same calendars and same systemic constructs, inequities will continue to exist. We need to celebrate Reward Schools under the current accountability system and learn what is taking place in those schools that are making a difference.

From the Reading Now Network, work, all of my schools with third grade are doing better than expected when poverty is taken into consideration, but we still have work to do.

As the report from PPAI stated, "No longer can we consider the problems and needs of low income students simply a matter of fairness... Their success or failure in the public schools will determine the entire body of human capital and educational potential that the nation will possess in the future. Without improving the educational support that the nation provides its low income students – students with the largest needs and usually with the least support -- the trends of the last decade will be prologue for a nation not at risk, but a nation in decline..."

I hope that you found this information to be helpful.

We appreciate your work in separating out poverty and highlighting the work that is taking place at Holland High School.

Have a nice weekend.