



Waterloo Region District School Board

# Teaching With Poverty In Mind

Considerations for School Administrators

*The symptoms of poverty are not simply states of mind;  
they actually change the brain.*

...Elizabeth Gould, neuroscientist, Princeton University

Fall 2012

## *Teaching With Poverty In Mind...*

### Considerations for School Administrators

Issue	Impact in Classroom	System Strategic Directions	Current System Supports	Proposed Next Steps...
<b>Nutrition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of focus, not ready to learn</li> <li>• Long term health issues</li> <li>• Stigmatism regarding not having food, feelings of neglect and shame by students &amp; resulting behaviour issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging students, families, staff and communities</li> <li>• Fostering wellness and well being</li> <li>• Embracing diversity and inclusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nutrition for Learning programs</li> <li>• Maycourt program</li> <li>• Direction from School Nutrition Policy 6007</li> <li>• Healthy School Recognition Program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help parents connect to emergency food assistance programs</li> <li>• Consider community garden programs</li> <li>• Seek out appropriate support through Service Clubs</li> </ul>
<b>Student Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact of chronic stress               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cognitive Stimulation issues</li> <li>○ Neurogenesis impairment</li> <li>○ Working memory issues</li> <li>○ Impulse regulation &amp; visuospatial language</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Lack of opportunities to demonstrate leadership ability               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ viewed differently than other students, not seen as having potential in this area</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging students, families, staff and communities</li> <li>• Pursuing student achievement and success for all</li> <li>• Promoting forward thinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional learning focus (learning cycles)</li> <li>• Use of High Yield Instructional Tools</li> <li>• Actualize system expectation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider capacity-building to address...               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Skill Building (processing, sequencing, short-term memory)</li> <li>○ Focus on 3 C's (continuous engagement, corrective feedback, celebration of positives)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Parent Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents at a distance from school, different priorities               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Need to survive</li> <li>○ Impact of stress</li> <li>○ Lack of trust</li> <li>○ Lack of self-esteem</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging students, families, staff and communities</li> <li>• Embracing diversity and inclusion</li> <li>• Championing quality public education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent/family-teacher connections that demonstrate our sensitivity and purposefulness to support families in stress</li> <li>• Various outreach initiatives at various schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore best practices currently in existence and share strategies</li> </ul>
<b>Character Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited support with development of empathic awareness               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Limited growth in areas of empathy, and other citizenship-based expectations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging students, families, staff and communities.</li> <li>• Embracing diversity and inclusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School-based Character Development initiatives based on system attributes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to model and directly teach Character attributes               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Co-operation, hope, integrity, social responsibility, empathy initiative, respect, kindness</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Issue	Impact in Classroom	System Strategic Directions	Current System Supports	Proposed Next Steps...
<b>ELL Supports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immigrant parents have dashed hopes regarding the value of their new life</li> <li>Economic pressures of families</li> <li>Confusion of language acquisition issues and special education needs</li> <li>Pressure on students to succeed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaging students, families, staff and communities</li> <li>Pursuing student achievement and success for all</li> <li>Embracing diversity and inclusion</li> <li>Championing quality public education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ELL support from Learning Services</li> <li>Special Education support from Learning Services</li> <li>Settlement worker supports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore availability of other community supports</li> </ul>
<b>Teacher Efficacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unrealistic expectations regarding student behavior &amp; inappropriate approaches to student engagement/student learning, relatively low expectations for student achievement</li> <li>Unrealistic approaches to nutrition/health</li> <li>Overuse of traditional instructional methods</li> <li>Curriculum not well integrated</li> <li>Lack of communication/relationship building with parents and students</li> <li>Opinions demonstrating lack of understanding regarding issues with poverty, lack of understanding that there may be lack of resources at home to complete work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaging students, families, staff and communities</li> <li>Pursuing student achievement and success for all</li> <li>Promoting forward thinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Efforts of individual teachers, administrators, and support staff</li> <li>System expectation and established high yield instructional tools to build capacity and resulting efficacy</li> <li>Structures in place for teacher collaboration and teamwork (Learning Cycles)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate opportunities to examine pre-existing attitudes</li> <li>Appropriate pedagogical skill development to change behaviour and impact values</li> <li>Education relating to specified issues within communities</li> <li>Supporting school efforts to adapt curriculum in response to challenges unique to students</li> <li>Understanding and attitudes in place to teach basic skills</li> </ul>
<b>Mental Health &amp; Well Being</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of understand regarding brain development (epigenetics) – i.e. impact of “hope” on brain growth.</li> <li>Absence of diagnosis of mental health issues</li> <li>Lack of proper nutrition and impact on mental health</li> <li>Lack of understanding regarding neuroplasticity (brains always change)</li> <li>Brain controls immune and endocrine systems, therefore brain trauma (stress) = physical illness (holistic impact).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaging students, families, staff and communities</li> <li>Fostering wellness and well being</li> <li>Pursuing student achievement and success for all</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board psychologists</li> <li>Link to community support, i.e. Lutherwood, Counseling</li> <li>WRDSB Mental Health Strategy (Literacy: Building Awareness, Resources, Pathways to Community Mental Health Supports)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to health and family doctor information.</li> <li>Inform teachers regarding supports and students background</li> <li>Determination and EQ beats IQ every time – change mindset.</li> </ul>

## Suggested Resources for Further Study...

### Books:

Jensen, E., Teaching With Poverty in Mind, ASCD Publication, 2009

Payne, R., A Framework for Understanding Poverty, aha! Process Inc., 2005

Parrett, W. & Budge, K., Turning High –Poverty Schools Into High-Performing Schools, ASCD Publication, 2012

### System Resources:

School Board, Community and Online Resources, Waterloo Region District School Board, 2012

### Community Resources:

A Community Fit for Children: A Focus on Young Children in Waterloo Region, Region of Waterloo, 2009

