



The District's Dime

Going Beyond the Budget Book

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Unlocking Opportunities: Services That Help Poor Children Succeed In the Classroom

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Poverty affects children negatively in a number of ways that make it harder to succeed in school. Low-income children are in poorer physical and mental health than non-poor children, and they are more likely than higher-income children to live in neighborhoods and families marked by instability. Across DC, over one in four children, or 28,600 children under 18, lived in poverty in 2012. That means living on less than \$18,500 per year for a family of three. Poverty rates are far higher in eastern and southern parts of the District. In some neighborhoods in Wards 7 and 8, the child poverty rate is greater than 50 percent.

This means that our city's approach to boosting student achievement needs to address these issues, in addition to improving the quality of classroom instruction. Giving students from disadvantaged backgrounds the supports they need is critical to improving the performance of DC's lowest-performing schools, most of which have high poverty rates, and ensuring that all students can benefit from the classroom improvements the DC Public Schools system is pursuing.

Today, DCFPI is launching a new series of [issue briefs](#) on the role our public schools can play in delivering key services — beyond classroom instruction — to help children living in poverty. The series takes a look at the non-classroom services and supports already being provided for children in high-poverty schools, and how the District could more strategically target its funding to simultaneously address poverty and student achievement. Today's [brief](#) offers an overview of the issues to be covered, with a summary of the research on how poverty affects a child's ability to learn.

Stay tuned for our second installment coming soon, on the ways housing instability affects our youngest residents and what policies can help.