

# CLEARINGHOUSE REVIEW

JOURNAL OF POVERTY LAW AND POLICY



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Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law

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# About This Issue

Many of us believe in the American dream—the notion that the American social, economic, and political system makes success possible for every individual. Even in changing times, advocates and clients still view a good public education as the foundation for building a bright and successful future for the children in our country. We must find a high-quality education for all of our children, not only some advantaged groups; the government and advocates are interested in meeting this challenge and in improving student achievement. Various federal laws protect against illegal discrimination in education. The Comprehensive Reform Demonstration Program, established under the U.S. Department of Education, offers financial incentives to schools to implement comprehensive reform. The U.S. Department of Agriculture provides meals to schoolchildren. These are but a few examples of federal government involvement in public education.

On their part, advocates assist clients in overcoming complications in achieving the education aspect of the American dream. Immigrants and their families have long recognized that they need education to move out of poverty, and they strive to find high-quality schools and language access for their children. Often seeking racial justice, many African American, Latino, and low-income students in urban and increasing numbers of suburban schools look to enroll in schools that are better-performing than their neighborhood schools.

Graduating college-ready from high school and obtaining a postsecondary degree or credential in today's economy can mean the difference between a lifetime of poverty and a secure economic future, according to [Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity, Education and Poverty](#) (2014). However, high school graduation and college-readiness rates are disturbingly low. Slightly over 69 percent of students—and only about 50 percent of African American, Hispanic, and low-income students—graduate from high school on time, many without the skills needed for college or work. And the college graduation rates are not encouraging (only 25 percent for low-income students).

The negative impact of poverty on education begins early in a child's life, the [National Center for Children in Poverty](#) reports. The center indicates that the [achievement gap](#) for low-income young children starts early in life and is difficult to reverse. Along with [economic analysis](#), the science on brain development suggests that investing in high-quality early care and learning is essential to reducing this gap. Of special concern are vulnerable groups who experience [multiple risks](#) beyond poverty and economic hardship.

With this, our first, CLEARINGHOUSE REVIEW theme issue, on education, we invite you to consider the variables that affect a child's chances at success in school and what we can do to improve those chances. In earlier issues, authors discussed stopping the [school-to-prison pipeline](#), told [an advocacy story](#) about a legal aid organization helping prevent a student's expulsion, and proposed [other ways](#) to achieve the American dream. The Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law has added an [education advocacy](#) area, led by [Carol Ashley](#), vice president of advocacy. Ashley's article recommends socioeconomic student assignment plans as ways for low-income families to enroll in high-quality schools and find racial diversity. The effect of housing on education, helping students with disabilities find competitive employment, offering free meals in schools, and overcoming the higher-education barriers of foster youths are also discussed in this theme issue. And the forthcoming May–June 2014 theme issue on disability will have articles on overlapping education and disability topics. Carol Ashley is the guest author for this issue's discussion forum, scheduled to begin in May. The final article describes how to help foster youth repair bad credit resulting from identity theft. Two Federal Trade Commission attorneys who collaborate with legal aid lawyers on consumer problems are the authors.

*Pat Spudis Hirsch*



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