PROJECT SUMMARY:
Rochester is a city fraught with poverty and high rates of segregation. The racial and socio-economic division is most notable in the public schools where urban children are struggling to meet state standards.

I am working with Genesee Community Charter School as well as Great Schools For All to raise awareness about and promote the expansion of socio-economically diverse schools in Rochester. Social determinants of health (SDH) have a huge impact on health throughout the life course. Level of education is one of the biggest SDHs.

BACKGROUND:
- We have known since the Coleman Report (1966) that concentrated poverty—more than an individual’s socio-economic status—negatively influences school performance.
- Rochester has the highest rates of extreme poverty when compared to similar sized cities (Table 1). As a state, New York has the highest rates of school segregation in the country.
- In 2016 & 2017, over 90% of RCSD students in grades 3-8 failed state tests in English and Math.
- There is significant evidence that integrating schools on the basis of socio-economic status results in improved outcomes for all students.
- In Raleigh, NC, in 1976, the city school district was integrated with a suburban district and subsequently a “poverty cap” of 40% was set at each school. In 2003, 91% of K-8 students in these schools passed the state math and ELA tests. Raleigh is still known for its great schools today.

OBJECTIVES:
- To raise awareness of socio-economically diverse schools as well as the benefits of this diversity in education
- To improve educational outcomes for all students by promoting diverse schools
- To pass legislation allowing charter schools to enroll a student body that does not match the socio-economic background of the district
- To open a sister school to GCCS that will allow for continued socio-economic integration in RCSD

Primary Measurable Outcome:
- We will monitor interest in the school by following the number of students signing up for the lottery annually. This number will be used as a proxy for increased awareness of the impact of diversity on educational outcomes.

METHODS:
- Meet with GCCS and GS4A leadership to strategize the promotion of socio-economically diverse schools
- Publicize the benefits of this type of schooling in newspapers and on the radio
- Collect yearly enrollment and application data for GCCS
- Continue to trend state test scores
- Work with community partners and law colleagues to draft an amendment to the charter law
- Investigate possible sites for a second, socio-economically integrated school located in the city—this will cut down on suburban flight (Figure 3)
- Follow up with key stakeholders in order to bring the discussion about diversity in education to the forefront in Rochester

REFERENCES:
Genesee Community Charter School Archive Data