Article 1: The Impact of Poverty and School Size on the 2015-16 Kansas State Assessment Results

Summary

Schools with higher percentages of students in poverty have lower student assessment results on the 2015-16 Kansas Math and ELA assessments, and larger schools have lower student achievement results than smaller schools. In addition, higher poverty schools are likely to have larger gaps in performance based on special education status and possibly school lunch eligibility when it comes to performing at grade level or above, but can be expected to have smaller gaps in performance based on special education status, lunch eligibility, and ELL program participation when it comes to performing at college/career ready or above. Finally, larger schools are likely to have larger gaps in performance based on lunch eligibility, ELL program participation, and possibly special education stats when it comes
to performing at grade level or above and can be expected to have smaller gaps based on special education status but larger gaps based on lunch status when it comes to performing at college/career ready or above.

Article 2: Impacts of School and Class Size on Student Outcomes

Introduction

In recent decades, class-size reduction has become a popular state-level strategy to improve student outcomes. According to The Center for American Progress, 77 percent of Americans believe that educational funding should be spent on smaller classes rather than increased teacher salaries.[1] Meanwhile, within the past 50 years, the percentage of schools that enroll more than 1,000 students has increased substantially from 7 percent to 25 percent.[2] Within the available literature, reductions to class size are often presented as an expensive reform
strategy, while larger schools are typically introduced as a means to reduce educational expenditures. Since both of these education reform strategies are prevalent, there is an extensive amount of research literature that examines the widespread effects that occur as a result of changes to class and school size. This report provides an overview of the available research related to the impact of class-size reduction and increases in school size. Furthermore, it presents relevant information related to the cost-effectiveness of both smaller class sizes and larger school models. This report is organized into the following sections:

- **Section I: Class Size and Student Outcomes** provides an overview of relevant findings from the most rigorous research studies that focus on the relationship between class size and student outcomes.
- **Section II: School Size and Student Outcomes** presents findings from a number of studies that examine that impact that school size has on student outcomes.
- **Section III: Cost-Effectiveness of School and Class Size Models** provides background on class-size and school-size models and an overview of the relevant literature that deliberates the cost-effectiveness of class-size reduction and high enrollment schools.

Article 3: The Effectiveness of Class Size Reduction

Introduction

Ask a parent if they want their child in a class of 15 or a class of 25. The answer is predictable. Intuitively, they know that smaller classes will provide more personalized attention, a better climate, and result in more learning. Ask teachers, and they will wax eloquent on the importance of small classes in providing individual support to their students. But ask a school board or district administrator, contending with a tight budget. They ask if the average class size can be a bit bigger.

Teacher pay and benefits are the largest single school expenditure, representing 80% of the nation's school budgets.1 Thus, small class size is a costly, important, contentious and perennial issue.

Article 4: Final School Size Study Report: Impact of Smaller Schools

Executive Summary

The report reviews the analyses and findings from the first two school size reports and introduces new analyses, findings, and recommendations on school size. This new content includes the following:

- an extension of the findings from the literature review on the impacts of smaller schools on student achievement, efficiency, and school climate;
- an identification of models for establishing smaller schools, as taken from the literature;
- an assessment of the impact of smaller schools on student achievement, school operating costs, and school construction funding in Maryland; and
- a presentation of recommendations on maximum school size.

To develop an optimal school size, multiple factors must be considered. The school sizes recommended herein are not made with the assumption that smaller schools are necessarily better schools. Rather, the recommended school sizes are based on the following findings and factors:

- the mixed results reported in the literature with respect to optimal school size;
- the mixed results of experimentation with small school designs across the country;
- the analysis of actual data on operations, achievement, and discipline in Maryland schools; and
- the school size parameters currently in use in several Maryland Local Education Agencies.

Article 5: Closing a School Best Practice Guide

Executive Summary

The report reviews areas that could be considered when reducing the building inventory. This content includes the following:

- Facts that area gathered for the decision;
- Coming to a decision which school to close;
- How to make the decision to close a school;
- How to make the transition when a school is closed; and
- How to dispose of the surplus inventory

The key take aways from this article is that there are many different factors, conditions, and values that need to be considered. Each of those factors will have varying level of importance based on each persons perspective of that value. If the decision to close a school must be made having a process, metrics, and involving the community are all necessary and key for the impacted students to have the appropriate pathway to a successful K-12 academic experience.