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The Effect of School Community Setting on Children Living in Poverty: A Survey of School Social Workers

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The Effect of School Community Setting on Children Living in Poverty:
A Survey of School Social Workers

Submitted by Nichelle A. Dillon
May, 2012

MSW Clinical Research Paper

The Clinical Research Project is a graduation requirement for MSW students at St. Catherine University/University of St. Thomas School of Social Work in St. Paul, Minnesota and is conducted within a nine-month time frame to demonstrate facility with basic social research methods.

Students must independently conceptualize a research problem, formulate a research design that is approved by a research committee and the university Institutional Review Board, implement the project, and publicly present their findings. This project is neither a Master's thesis nor a dissertation.

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**The Effect of School Community Setting on Children Living in Poverty:
A Survey of School Social Workers**

by Nichelle A. Dillon

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Abstract

Drawing on previous research establishing the effects poverty on children's mental health and behavioral problems, exposure to violence and aggression, and lower school achievement, this research sought to examine whether any differences exist in the challenges faced by students living in poverty in urban settings versus students in rural settings from the perspective of school social workers. A survey with a mixture of both quantitative and qualitative questions was sent via e-mail to school social workers in Minnesota through the Minnesota School Social Workers Association (MSSWA). A total of 20 responses from both urban and rural settings were collected. Findings supported previous research in that mental health, violence and aggression, and low school achievement were problems faced by students in both rural and urban community settings. The findings did not indicate a statistically significant difference between challenges faced by students living in poverty in rural settings and those living in poverty in urban settings. Community collaboration and working with students on resiliency factors were noted as essential to intervention by school social workers in both community settings. Qualitative responses indicated an understanding of challenges unique to each community setting, including a lack of available resources in rural settings and limited resources due to high demand in urban settings. Suggestions for future research include a greater look at how to effectively integrate community collaboration in impoverished communities. Implications for social work practice include a greater demand for policy practice among school social workers and advocacy for programs designed to empower students living in poverty to greater levels of academic, psychological, and social functioning.

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**The Effect of School Community Setting on Children Living in Poverty:
A Survey of School Social Workers**

Forty-two percent of America's children live at 200% of the Federal Poverty Line or below (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2009). With this many children living in low-income households, the effect that poverty has on a child's academic, psychological, and social functioning has been the topic of research for years. A landmark longitudinal study by Hart and Risley (1995) found that differences exist in language development between children in high socioeconomic status (SES) households and children in low SES households from a very young age. By the age of 3, these children were already on a lower developmental path than their peers from a higher SES. In addition to the educational developmental disparities between children living in poverty and those living in a higher SES, the National Center for Children in Poverty (2006) found that 50% of children involved in the welfare system have some sort of mental health concern. When these impoverished children enter school with both mental health and academic concerns, school social workers are entrusted with the role of working with, and advocating for, these students living in poverty. In order for school social workers to effectively empower impoverished students to greater levels of personal and professional functioning, it is important to understand the many social factors that influence the mental health and academic achievement of a student living in poverty.

When looking at these factors it is also important to keep in mind the greater community setting in which the child's school exists. Fram, Miller-Cribbs, and Van Horn (2007) found that schools in high poverty areas had, on average, lower test scores and a greater proportion of below-grade-level readers (p. 316). While previous research focuses

on the effects on students in high poverty areas specifically, this research looks at the differences in challenges present between urban communities and rural communities, posing the question: is there a difference in the challenges faced by students living in poverty in urban settings versus students in rural settings as perceived by school social workers? In examining the different challenges that exist for students in rural settings compared to those in urban settings, school social workers will gain a greater understanding of the community effects at play when working with students in poverty, a knowledge that will help improve and individualize the interventions they use within their practice.

Literature Review

There has been a great deal of research linking poverty to a variety of different concerns for school-aged children. Poverty has been found to have a significant influence on variables such as mental health and behavioral problems, violence and aggression, and school achievement. When studying this influence of community setting on the prevalence of these factors on children from different areas, as this research seeks to do, it is also important to look at previous research on community setting's influence on children living in poverty. Past research has found that there are community differences in school quality, neighborhood safety, and student aspirations. However, school community setting has also served as a resiliency factor for some impoverished children, along with community collaboration and early intervention. The relationship between community setting, poverty, and the influence of both on school-aged children is complex and worthy of continued examination.

Poverty and Mental Health and Behavioral Problems

Poverty has been linked with both mental health and behavioral problems in school-aged children. The National Center for Children in Poverty (2006) found that 21% of low-income children ages 6 to 17 have mental health problems. Of these children, 57% of them live in households at or below the federal poverty line (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2006). These numbers illustrate the effect that poverty, especially extreme poverty, can have on the mental health of a young child. In looking at potential reasons for the high number of mental health concerns among children in poverty, Bringewatt and Gershoff (2010) found that these children were more likely to have been exposed to risk factors such as: life stressors (financial and emotional), violence, parental distress, parental depression, and substance abuse. In turn, exposure to these stressors left the children with increased vulnerability to mental health and behavioral problems (p. 1292). These findings seem to indicate that the stress of living in poverty, especially that felt by the parents, leaves children predisposed to experiences that can often cause mental health and behavioral problems.

Similarly, Slack and Yoo (2005) looked at the effects of poverty-related stressors, food hardship (limited or uncertain access to food) in particular, on the mental health and behaviors of the children ages 3 to 12 in families who were receiving welfare (p. 512). They found that food hardship, parental stress, and parental depression were correlated with externalizing behaviors (temper tantrums, picking fights) and internalizing behaviors (anxiety, depression) across age groups (p. 517, 522). The struggle of those in poverty to locate food or to access food eligibility programs for their families, coupled with the stress and negative mental health experienced by the parents, appear to have a significant

effect on the negative behaviors of young children across a wide age range. Given the high rate of mental health and behavioral concerns of children living in poverty, more research is needed on the life stressors associated with poverty that predispose children to such problems.

Poverty and Violence/Aggression

Carlson (2006) studied the link between poverty and both direct and indirect exposure to violence. This survey of middle school and high school students found that dissociative behaviors (going blank, numbing, pretending to be somewhere else) and aggressive behaviors (damaging something of others) were significantly related to poverty rate. Students who lived in poverty were also more likely to agree with aggressive statements such as: “carrying a gun makes people feel safe” and “I’d like to have a gun so people would look up to me.” These students were also more likely to be rated at a high level of comfort with aggression and as perceiving violence as “no big deal.” In addition to the more indirect associations of students in poverty with aggressive behaviors and normalization of aggressive acts, poverty was also found to be a strong predictor of direct exposure to school violence (p. 91-92). This study illustrates the complex relationship between childhood poverty, exposure to violence, and comfort with aggression.

Looking beyond the school-aged exposure to aggression and violence, Ou and Reynolds (2010) studied a sample of adult male criminal offenders from the Chicago Longitudinal Study (CLS), an ongoing study of “low-income minority children growing up in high-poverty neighborhoods in Chicago” (p. 1097). In researching various factors that could be predictors of adult male crime, Ou and Reynolds (2010) found negative

home environment, maltreatment experience, troublemaking, number of school moves, and family participation in Aid for Dependent Children (AFDC) by child's age 3 were all significant indicators of adult male crime (p. 1103). These findings are extremely significant given the established influence of home environment and AFDC participation as potential indicators of future adult crimes.

Poverty and School Achievement

While poverty has been linked to mental health and behavioral problems of school-aged children, it has also been linked to academic achievement. Lee (2009) conducted a longitudinal study looking at reading scores of children living in persistent poverty, temporary poverty, and no poverty at all. Children living in temporary and persistent poverty had lower reading scores throughout childhood (from ages 5 to 12) than those children not living in poverty. Children living in persistent poverty also experienced larger gaps in reading scores than children living in temporary poverty, particularly as they got older (p. 84, 86). This link between poverty, even temporary poverty, and achievement in reading scores depicts the wide reaching effects of poverty on a young child's academic development.

Hart and Risley (1995) conducted a longitudinal study of children from ages 1 to 3 from professional, middle, and welfare class families to study the everyday factors that may affect a student's future success in school. With the use of the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale at age 3, family socioeconomic status was found to be strongly associated with a child's vocabulary growth, vocabulary use, and general accomplishment on the IQ scale (p. 143-144). Hart and Risley (1995) also found a strong relationship between a child's accomplishments on the IQ scale and a child's experiences

of interacting with parents (length of interaction, language richness of the interaction), some accounting for as much as half of the differences (p. 144). This strong relationship between parental interaction and IQ results indicates that there are interactional factors within the home that promote language development, something that parents in high-poverty households may not be as readily available to provide.

Poverty and School Community Setting

In studying the effects of poverty on student achievement, Fram et al. (2007) looked at the structural factors influencing schools in high-poverty areas. They found that in high-poverty areas, schools had teachers with lower credentials, were more likely to use universal standards of assessment (as opposed to individualized), had a higher proportion of below grade-level readers, and students' tested lower (p. 316). These findings, particularly the lower test scores and greater number of below-level readers in these high-poverty areas, indicate that poverty may have an effect on academic achievement through community-level factors, such as the neighborhood the school is located in.

At the neighborhood-level, Chapman (2003) found that, for children living in high-poverty areas, neighborhood safety was associated with school attendance (p. 11). This is significant because, as Chapman (2003) points out, school attendance is essential to all other interventions. The reasons for poor school attendance, such as neighborhood safety, must be taken into account by school social workers when working on low attendance and achievement with students from high-poverty areas (p. 13). The influence of neighborhood safety on school attendance, and thereby other means of participation,

established in this study provide insight into what factors may be at play when working on attendance issues with students living in poverty.

Bickel, Smith, and Eagle (2002) further explored the influence of neighborhood effects on achievement through their research with kindergarten-aged children in poor, rural neighborhoods in West Virginia. The children were administered intelligence tests at the beginning and end of the school year, while their parents filled out an inventory scoring the quality of their rural neighborhood. Children of those families living in neighborhoods reported as “worse” than other neighborhoods had statistically significant lower student achievement. All children were chosen from poor, rural areas, with a median family income of \$10,800, but it was those children from neighborhoods deemed “worse” that performed poorer than their equally as poor, yet “better” reported neighborhood counterparts (p. 97-101).

Going beyond exploring the neighborhood effects between rural communities, McCracken and Barcinas (1991) looked at the differences in characteristics and aspirations between high school students in rural communities and those of high school students in urban communities. They found that, overall, students from rural communities had lower scores on socioeconomic status inventories, expected lower incomes in their future careers, were less likely to plan on attending a 4-year-college, and were more likely to express interests in careers they had observed such as agriculture, education, and health sciences than students from urban communities (p. 33, 38). These findings indicated that perhaps there are community factors at work in the way children envision their future, particularly in their career and income expectations.

Resilience Factors For Children in Poverty

As noted before, Bickel et al. (2002) found that the type of rural community can affect school achievement if the community is seen as “worse” than others. Conversely, Bickel et al. (2002) also found that a rural community seen as “better” than others can actually be a source of strength for students living in poverty. If a rural community has a “sense of safety, stability, social cohesion, and shared world view,” a similar school community can be created that fosters security, hope, and a commitment to learning (p. 103-104).

Jonson-Reid (2008) also noted the empowering potential of communities when fostering school success and, in turn, encouraged social workers to collaborate with communities in order to further enhance the success of their students (p. 131). One such collaboration, as detailed in Cook and Orthner (2001), involved working with community social services to provide an afterschool program for children whose families were receiving aid from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). This collaboration proved to be extremely effective: with significant improvements in end-of-the-year reading and math tests for students who were in the program for a year, and even more significant increases for students who were in the program for two years (p. 101). This intervention included community collaboration and early intervention, another resilience factor, in order to increase academic performance for children living in poverty.

Campbell and Ramey (1994) found similar successes in increasing academic achievement for children living in poverty through early educational intervention methods both before school-age and throughout the elementary school years. A follow-up study showed that

students who received the early intervention at the preschool level still experienced significant leads on test scores at age 12 (p. 695).

Another, more micro-level resilience factor is that of the student's home environment. Lee (2009) found that for children ages 5 and 6 who scored higher on the home environment score, measuring cognitive stimulation and emotional support in the home, also had higher reading scores regardless of whether they lived in persistent poverty, temporary poverty, or no poverty at all (p. 81, 88). Through illustrating the existence of resiliency factors at the community, neighborhood, school, and familial levels, this research indicates that there are actions that can be taken at all levels to empower students living in poverty.

Childhood Poverty from the Ecological Perspective

This study seeks to look at the issue of childhood poverty through the lens of the ecological perspective. The ecological perspective focuses on the person, their environment, and the relationship between the two (Gitterman & Germain, 2008). In studying the differences in challenges faced by students living in poverty in urban settings versus students in rural settings, this research seeks to understand the relationship between these two environments and the children raised in poverty within them. Gumpert, Saltman, and Sauer-Jones (2000) assert that because the social work profession emerged as a response to the social problems of population explosion within cities, social work has continued to approach practice techniques through an urban framework. They argue that since rural practice comes with its own set of "cultural values, environmental factors, and specific problems," different practice models are necessary for working in a rural setting than those used in an urban setting (p. 20). In studying the role of school

social work within different communities from the ecological perspective, this research will seek to understand how the different challenges that exist within each of these environments affect the impoverished children raised within them. Gitterman and Germain (2008) maintain that habitats can “promote or interfere” with performance at both the familial and community levels. In conducting research on the effects of both the urban habitat and the rural habitat on children living in poverty, a better understanding of the extent to which these habitats influence an individual will be gained.

The ecological perspective looks not only at the effect a habitat has on individual functioning, but also the way a person’s “niche” within a habitat defines his or her status. Gitterman and Germain (2008) point out that many people, especially those that are economically marginalized, hold niches that deter them from obtaining their basic needs and do not promote empowerment. Therefore, when working with people operating within such a niche, the social worker must be acutely aware of the intricacies of the relationship between the person and the environment (Gitterman & Germain, 2008). In looking specifically at the difference in practicing social work in urban settings and in rural settings, Croxton, Jayaratne, and Mattison (2002) found that five main practice differences exist between social workers in the two community settings. Those differences exist in the areas of bartering, maintaining confidentiality, competency, entering into dual relationships with clients, and forming social relationships with clients. They argue that because of these differences in practice standards, social workers should not practice within a universal standard, but rather their practice should be shaped by the customs of the community in which they are working (p. 118-119). This belief that the

community environment should shape the way in which a social worker practices holds true to the ecological ideal of understanding a person within their environment.

Caudill (1993) identifies specific barriers that exist to social work practice within a rural setting. These barriers include: substandard housing, lack of accessible transportation, high illiteracy rates, and lack of accessible services due to geographic isolation. As a result, rural school social workers often feel overwhelmed, particularly working in an environment that often receives less funding than urban school systems (p. 181-182). Through Caudill's (1993) research, the effect of the rural habitat on both the niches of the social worker and the residents of these communities is established. According to Gitterman and Germain (2008) poverty, as seen through the ecological perspective, is often the result of external environmental stressors. However, these stressors, in turn, can cause internal physiological and emotional distress for the individual. The complex relationship between the person and environment provides a framework for understanding and tackling poverty through individual and community level interventions. Due to the established differences between school social work practice within urban and rural settings, and the challenges faced by children living in poverty, further investigation through an ecological framework would help shape an understanding of best practice techniques that are suited to both the person and the environment.

Methods

Research Question

My research question is: Is there a difference in the challenges faced by students living in poverty in urban settings versus students in rural settings as perceived by school social workers?

Methodology

I used an electronic survey with both quantitative and qualitative questions to measure school social workers' opinions of the greatest challenges facing children living in poverty, as well as to collect demographic information regarding the type of school they work in, the school's community setting, and the level of poverty represented at their school. The survey was used to access a large population of school social workers within the state of Minnesota. Monette, Sullivan, and DeJong (2011) assert that one of the greatest strengths of surveys is their ability to be generalized to a population. A survey allows for a greater number of respondents to be reached, thus increasing the representation of members of a large group (p. 164). In the case of this research, the number of school social workers in Minnesota is too large to reach via any other research method. In order to gain a sampling of school social workers in Minnesota that could have the potential for generalizability, a survey is the best method.

Sampling

The survey participants varied across age, gender, socio-economic status, and background. The survey was sent via e-mail to the President of the Minnesota School Social Workers Association (MSSWA). The President, in turn, forwarded the survey to the MSSWA regional chairs who then forwarded it on to the MSSWA members in their

region. As a result of this sampling method, the researcher has no way of knowing how many people received the survey via e-mail or any identifying information of the respondents. Question #1 was used to control for social workers who are active members of the MSSWA, but do not currently practice in a school setting; responses thus indicating were disregarded. The e-mail included the survey letter/consent form and a link to complete the survey electronically on the Qualtrics survey system. In addition to questions regarding the community setting the school social workers currently practice in, the survey also included both categorical and continuous questions on the type of school in which they practice (elementary, middle or high school), the rate of Free and Reduced Lunches at the school, the types of social work practice they are involved in, and their own opinions on the challenges facing students in poverty.

There were 31 total respondents. In order to classify responses based on community setting, the U.S. Census Bureau (2011) "Geographic Terms and Concepts" definitions were used to categorize the populations responses as urban, and was used as a guide for classifying communities as rural. To classify urban communities the U.S. Census Bureau (2011) defines "Urbanized Areas" as a community with a population of 50,000 or more. The document also classifies rural as a community with fewer than 2,500 residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Because of the large population gap between 2,500 and 49,999 residents that exists between the urban and rural classifications, for the purpose of this survey the rural category was expanded to include all communities with fewer than 10,000 residents. Cities or towns with populations between 10,000 and 49,999 were classified as suburban and disqualified.

Using these “Rural” and “Urban” community identifiers to classify the 31 respondents, 11 school social workers indicated practicing in a “Rural” community with a population of 0 to 9,999 and 9 school social workers indicated practicing in an “Urban” community with a population of 50,000+. The remaining 11 respondents fell into the population categories of 10,000-49,999, which were discarded from the data set. Therefore, there were a total of 20 respondents used in data analysis, 55% from rural communities and 45% from urban communities, illustrating the diversity of community settings the sampled school social workers practice in.

The school social workers reported working in a variety of school settings when given the options of Elementary, Middle School, or High School settings, with the ability to select all that apply and fill in an “other” option. Out of a total of 33 response selections: 14 respondents (70%) indicated that they work in an Elementary school setting, 10 respondents (50%) indicated working in a Middle school setting, 6 respondents (30%) indicated working in a High school setting, and 3 respondents (15%) indicated “other.” Of the 3 “other” responses, two people reported working in a Kindergarten through 12th grade setting, and one respondent reported working in a day treatment setting. These findings show that the sampled school social workers practice with students in a variety of grade levels.

This sampling plan should accurately represent school social workers in Minnesota. However, using the Minnesota School Social Workers’ Association list does not reach those school social workers who are not MSSWA members. Because of this, there is the limitation of a low response rate given the number of members and the frequency with which they receive survey requests. Also, it is possible that some of the

regional chairs may not have forwarded the survey on after receiving it from the MSSWA President, which would have excluded an entire region of social workers. Another possible limitation is that this subset of school social workers may hold opinions that differ in some ways from the school social workers who opt not to be members of the MSSWA. Since this survey was only e-mailed to school social workers in Minnesota, it cannot be generalized to represent the opinions of the entire population of school social workers in the United States. While the same statistical populations may define rural and urban areas throughout the United States, their qualities differ by region, thus the results of a survey of school social workers in Minnesota can only be seen as representative of that state.

This study contains safeguards for human subjects participating in the survey. No identifying information was collected regarding survey responses, and I never had access to the e-mail addresses of MSSWA members, as the e-mail was sent out to members via the association's president. There were no risks or benefits to participating or not participating in the survey. This research project was subject to Exempt Level Review by the University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board.

Measurement

In this study the Independent Variable (IV) is School Community Setting and it contains two levels: Rural and Urban. The IV was measured using question #5 on the survey, an interval, continuous question that asked about the population of the community in which the school social workers practice. Respondents were giving the options of choosing community populations: less than 2,500; 2,500 – 9,999; 10,000 – 24,999; 25,000 – 49,999; and 50,000 or more. Respondents indicating “less than 2,500”

and “2,500-9,999” were classified as “Rural,” respondents indicating “50,000 or more” were classified as “Urban,” and respondents indicating anything other than these responses were discarded since they did not meet the urban or rural qualifiers.

The Dependent Variable is Challenges Faced by Students Living in Poverty. This was measured by questions #15 and #16. Question number 15 is a yes-or-no nominal, categorical question with multiple levels that asked the school social worker about the challenges faced by students in poverty. It asked the respondents to indicate with a “yes” or “no” their own observations of the following challenges when working with students in poverty: lack of access to services, lower academic achievement, mental health concerns, transportation, sexual activity, trauma/violence, bullying, and the option to write in any other concerns the social workers witness. Question number 16 is a yes-or-no nominal, categorical question that asked the school social workers if they believe that a school’s community setting has any effect on students living in poverty. If they indicated “yes,” the question then involved a qualitative component that asked the social workers to write in what positive, negative, or neutral effects they witness the community having on students living in poverty.

Questions 1-4, 6-14, and 17 measured other related variables. Question numbers 1 and 2 are both yes-or-no nominal, categorical questions. Question number 1 asked the respondents if they are currently practicing social work in a school setting. As this question was used to control for social workers who are not currently practicing in a school setting, the survey was set up to automatically end if the respondent answered “no.” Question number 2 asked the respondents to indicate with a “yes” or “no” what grade levels are represented in the school setting they practice in. Options included:

elementary, middle school, high school, and an “other” option in which they can enter a different level of grade classification.

Question numbers 3 and 4 are both ratio, continuous questions. Question number 3 asked the respondents to indicate the approximate number of students in the school district they practice in. Question number 4 asked the respondents to indicate the approximate number of social workers in their school district.

Questions number 6, 7, and 14 asked the school social workers about the extent to which poverty is present in the student population of the school in which they practice. Question numbers 6 and 7 are ordinal, categorical questions. Question number 6 asked the respondents to rate the community of the school in which they practice from “very poor” to “very affluent.” Question number 7 asked the respondents to indicate the percentage of students at their school site that receive Free and Reduced Lunch. Question number 14 is a yes-or-no nominal, categorical question that simply asked the social workers if they sometimes work with students in poverty.

Question number 8 is a yes or no nominal, categorical question that asked the social workers if their school social work job descriptions, as defined by the school district in which they practice, includes working with students in poverty as one of their responsibilities.

Questions #9 and #10 asked questions regarding the micro-level practice that the social workers implement with their students. Question number 9 is a yes or no nominal, categorical question with multiple levels that asked the school social workers about what help they provide to students. It asked the respondents to indicate with a “yes” or “no” the various things that they help students with in their practice. The list includes:

substandard housing, lack of accessible transportation, poor academic achievement, lack of accessible services, mental health concerns, exposure to violence, bullying, and the option to write in any other issues the social workers help their students with. Question number 10 is a yes or no nominal, categorical question that asked the social workers if they do any work around fostering resiliency in the homes of children. If the social workers responded “yes” then they were asked to explain and provided a text box to elaborate on the work they do around fostering resiliency.

Questions #11 and #12 are questions about the school social worker’s practice at the mezzo- and macro-levels. Question number 11 is a yes-or-no nominal, categorical question that asked the social workers if the schools in which they practice collaborate with the community to work with and empower students. If the social workers responded “yes” then they were asked to explain and given a text box to write in the ways in which their schools collaborate with the community. Question number 12 is a yes-or-no nominal, categorical question that asked if the social workers were involved in any policy practice or legislative advocacy work. If the social workers responded “yes” then they were asked to explain the policy practice and legislative work they were involved in.

Question number 13 is a yes-or-no nominal, categorical question that asked the social workers if they personally believe that there is a difference between the roles of a school social worker in a school located in a rural community versus a school located in an urban community. If the school social workers answered “yes” then they were asked to elaborate.

Finally, question number 17 is a qualitative question that asked the social workers to provide any final comments they may have had regarding school social work practice with students living in poverty in rural or urban community settings.

Overall, these survey questions have moderate reliability because, while it may accurately represent the interventions used, and opinions of, the school social workers when they fill the survey out, those things may change over time. Also, it is probable that the community populations and student demographics will change, especially over long periods of time. These survey questions should have high validity as they ask the social workers their own personal opinions, the interventions they utilize in practice, and other aspects of their social work practice, all of which the social workers would know very well. Even the questions such as community population and student numbers, which the respondents may not know off the top of their heads, are all things that could be easily accessed by a quick internet search.

The answers to these questions provide insight into the opinions school social workers hold on the effects of the school's community setting on children living in poverty. While my biases led me to believe that there would be a significant difference in the challenges faced, and interventions used, by school social workers depending on community setting, this survey attempts to take an objective look at these questions and quantitatively examine the ways in which each community setting is similar or different as reported by school social workers.

Statistics and Findings

I was able to use the Qualtrics online system to run both descriptive and inferential statistics. The initial report run by Qualtrics contained the descriptive statistics

for each of the questions and also had a feature which made it possible to control for community setting, leaving the suburban responses out of the data set. Also, the Qualtrics system has a program to run crosstab analyzes which I used for the inferential statistics.

Descriptive Statistics

First, I ran Descriptive Statistics on questions 2-5, 8, and 10-12. Questions number 2 and 5 dealt with the community setting the school social worker's practice in and the grade levels they work with, and were reported in the sampling portion of the methods section. With question #3, the ratio, continuous question indicating the number of students in the school district of the respondent, I collected data on the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum of the responses. In all, 20 people responded to the question. Of the 20 responses, one was discarded because the respondent indicated "32 in learning center about 30 in Alternative high school" which did not answer the question about the approximate number of students in the whole school district. After making these changes, there were 19 responses used in collecting data. The minimum response was 240 students in the social worker's school district, the maximum was 45,000 students, the mean was 11,379.21 students, and the standard deviation was 15,561.25.

For question #4, the ratio continuous question indicating the number of social workers in the respondent's school district, I collected data on the mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum. There were a total of 20 responses. Collecting data on the 20 responses, the minimum number of social workers reported in a school district was 1 social worker and the maximum was 125 social workers in a district. The mean was 27.3 and the standard deviation was 41.46.

For question number 8, the yes or no nominal, categorical question asking if the school social worker’s job description includes working with students in poverty, I collected data on the numbers and percentages of those answering “yes” or “no.” Of the 20 total responses to this question, 8 respondents (40%) indicated “yes,” their job description does include working with students in poverty while 12 respondents (60%) indicated “no,” their job description does not include working with students in poverty.

For questions #10, #11, and #12, the yes-or-no nominal, categorical questions regarding the social workers’ interventions at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice, I collected data on the numbers and percentages of those answering “yes” or “no.” For those answering “yes” I also collected the qualitative data in which they explain the type of work that they do in fostering resiliency, community collaboration, or policy work. This qualitative data is discussed in detail in the “qualitative themes” section of this paper. For question #10, the question asking the school social worker if they do any work around fostering resiliency in the home, 19 people responded. Of these 19 responses, 10 people (53%) indicated “yes,” they do work around fostering resiliency in the home while 9 respondents (47%) indicated “no,” they do not do any work around fostering resiliency in the home.

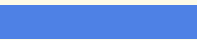

Answer	Response Bar	Response	%
Yes		10	53%
No		9	47%
Total		19	100%

Figure 1. School social workers’ work around fostering resiliency in the home. This figure illustrates the numbers and percentages of school social workers who reported that they do work with students around fostering resiliency in the home.

Question #11, the question asking if the school in which the school social worker practices collaborates with the community to work with and empower students, received

19 total responses. Of these 19 responses, 18 respondents (95%) indicated “yes,” the school they practice in collaborates with the community, while 1 respondent (5%) indicated “no,” the school he or she practices in does not collaborate with the community to work with and empower students.

Answer	Response Bar	Response	%
Yes		18	95%
No		1	5%
Total		19	100%

Figure 2. School collaboration with the community. This figure illustrates the numbers and percentages of school social workers who reported that the school in which they practice collaborates with the community.

Question #12, which asked the respondents if they do any policy practice or legislative advocacy work, received a total of 20 responses. Of these 20 responses, 3 respondents (15%) indicated “yes,” they do policy practice or legislative advocacy work while 17 respondents (85%) indicated “no,” they do not do any policy practice or legislative advocacy work.

Answer	Response Bar	Response	%
Yes		3	15%
No		17	85%
Total		20	100%

Figure 3. School social workers’ policy practice or legislative advocacy work. This figure illustrates the numbers and percentages of school social workers who reported that they do any policy practice or legislative advocacy work.

Inferential Statistics

I ran a crosstab analysis using question #5, the question using population to determine if a community is “Urban” or “Rural” and question #15, the yes-or-no nominal, categorical question with multiple levels where the respondents indicated the challenges faced by students in poverty. I ran the crosstab on each level of question #15,

and collected data the respondents filled in on the “other” category. My hypothesis was that there would be a difference in the report of challenges faced by students in poverty from school social workers practicing in an “Urban” setting versus those practicing in a “Rural” setting. After running the crosstab analysis (Table 1), $p > .05$. Since p was not less than .05, it was not statistically significant for any of the challenges. Therefore, there was no difference in the report of challenges faced by students in poverty from school social workers practicing in an “Urban” setting versus those practicing in a “Rural” setting.

Table 1

Crosstab Analysis, Community Setting and Challenges Faced by Students in Poverty

Community Setting	Challenges faced by Students in Poverty									Total
	Lack of access to services	Lower academic achievement	Mental health concerns	Low school attendance	Transportation	Sexual activity	Trauma/Violence	Bullying	Other	
Rural (0-9,999)	8 (72.73%)	11 (100%)	10 (90.9%)	11 (100%)	8 (72.73%)	8 (72.73%)	9 (81.82%)	9 (81.82%)	2 (18.19%)	11 (100%)
Urban (50,000+)	8 (88.89%)	8 (88.89%)	9 (100%)	9 (100%)	9 (100%)	5 (55.56%)	9 (100%)	9 (100%)	3 (33.33%)	9 (100%)
Total	16 (80%)	19 (95%)	19 (95%)	20 (100%)	17 (85%)	13 (65%)	18 (90%)	18 (90%)	5 (25%)	20 (100%)

Note. The columns indicate the responses on the question indicating the challenges faced by students in poverty within the respondent's school social work practice. The rows divide responses based on if the participant practices in a "Rural" community (population 0-9,999) or an "Urban" community (population 50,000+). Within each row, the first number is the total number of respondents in the community setting to indicate a particular challenge and the second number is the percentage of people within the community category that indicated a challenge.

I also ran a crosstab analysis using question #5, the question using population to determine if a community is “Urban” or “Rural” and question #9, the yes or no nominal, categorical question with multiple levels where the respondents indicated the categories of help provided to students. I ran the crosstab on each level of question #9, and collected data the respondents filled in on the “other” category. My hypothesis was that there would be a difference in the type of help provided to students by school social workers practicing in an “Urban” setting versus those practicing in a “Rural” setting. After running the crosstab analysis (Table 2), $p > .05$. Since p was not less than .05, it was not statistically significant for any of the types of help. Therefore, there was no difference in the type of help provided to students by school social workers practicing in an “Urban” setting versus those practicing in a “Rural” setting.

Table 2

Crosstab Analysis, Community Setting and Areas of Help Provided to Students in Poverty

Community Setting	Areas of Help Provided to Students									Total
	Substandard housing	Lack of accessible transportation	Poor academic achievement	Lack of accessible services	Mental health concerns	Exposure to violence	Bullying	Special Education	Other	
Rural (0-9,999)	0 (0%)	4 (36.36%)	11 (100%)	7 (63.64%)	11 (100%)	9 (81.82%)	11 (100%)	11 (100%)	0 (0%)	11 (100%)
Urban (50,000+)	5 (55.56%)	6 (66.67%)	8 (88.89%)	5 (55.56%)	9 (100%)	9 (100%)	9 (100%)	9 (100%)	2 (22.22%)	9 (100%)
Total	5 (25%)	10 (50%)	19 (95%)	12 (60%)	20 (100%)	18 (90%)	20 (100%)	20 (100%)	2 (10%)	20 (100%)

Note. The columns indicate the responses on the question indicating the areas of help provided to students in poverty within the respondent's school social work practice. The rows divide responses based on if the participant practices in a "Rural" community (population 0-9,999) or an "Urban" community (population 50,000+). Within each row, the first number is the total number of respondents in the community setting to indicate a particular area of help and the second number is the percentage of people within the community category that indicated an area of help.

Qualitative Themes

Lastly, I looked for emerging themes that arose from the qualitative answers to questions 10-13, and 16-17. Question number 10 asked about the work a school social worker does around fostering resiliency in the home, question number 11 asked about the school's community collaborate efforts, and question number 12 asked about the social worker's advocacy work. Each question was geared toward a certain level of practice, and for each I looked at emerging themes, comparing them to the community setting in which the respondent was working from. Questions 13, 16, and 17 asked questions about the social worker's perceptions of differences in school social work practice based on community setting.

For question number 10 regarding the work a school social worker does around fostering resiliency in the home, many similar themes were found between the Rural and Urban respondents. Both sets of respondents indicated working with students on an individual level with their problem solving and advocacy skills, while also communicating with parents to foster communication with the school and help them find the resources necessary to their family situations. One respondent noted that the social worker is the key link to fostering communication between the family, school, and community and, in turn, increasing resiliency.

I believe resiliency of our students can be built upon by the integration and cooperation between the home, school, and community. The more I work to serve as a link between these areas, the more I feel I've seen students have resiliency in their home (and other environments as well) (Respondent, January 2012).

Therefore, these school social workers indicated they believe that facilitating collaboration between systems at work within the students' lives is a key aspect of a school social worker's job and essential to fostering resiliency within the home and elsewhere.

Question number 11 dealt with the school social workers' efforts in collaborating with the outside community. Both Rural and Urban respondents indicated a high level of community collaboration with outside organizations, the county, mental health providers, churches, businesses, mentorship programs, law enforcement, and youth programs. One Rural participant indicated a close working relationship with Tribal Social Services. Another respondent described a collaboration program to increase availability of mental health services to their students:

The mental health clinic, public health, family services, and the two main school districts actually have formed a collaboration to provide monies for mental health programming in the middle and high schools. This is specific to mental health issues, but it does help empower those students it serves (Respondent, January 2012).

This, along with many other collaborative efforts reported by respondents, illustrates the efforts school social workers in both community settings put forward when working with their students.

Question number 12 asked the school social workers about the policy and legislative advocacy work they do. Only 3 social workers (2 Rural, 1 Urban) reported participating in any policy work. One of the school social workers reported only working on advocating for policies at the school-level to help students, while the other two social

workers reported meeting with legislators. The social worker located in an urban setting also reported attending the MSSWA school social worker day at the capitol.

Question number 13 asked the school social worker if he or she believes that there is a difference between the roles of a school social worker in a school located in a rural community versus a school located in an urban community. This question directly asked the participant to give his or her opinion on the overall research question. Of the 14 responses (9 Rural, 5 Urban), 8 respondents (5 Rural, 3 Urban) indicated that the largest difference between school social work practice in a rural setting and an urban setting is the lack of access to resources in a rural setting compared to an urban setting. Of the rural respondents, 2 specifically mentioned a lack of access to mental health services. Also, one rural respondent noted that he or she provides more mental health services to the students as a result of these lack of services, while another rural practitioner noted that he or she felt like a more generalist practice social worker because of the need to be versatile while noting that urban school social workers may be more able to develop specializations. Urban respondents echoed these sentiments with 2 reporting that rural social workers probably have to do a wider range of work as a result of the fewer accessible services and less support available on the school staff (such as public health nurse). While 3 urban respondents did make note of the greater access to services available in a city, 2 urban respondents also noted that there are more restrictions to services in urban areas, which also causes a barrier.

The small-scale size of a rural community drew comments about particular strengths and challenges of this setting from both rural and urban respondents. Because of the small rural community, dual relationships were an issue reported by one rural school

social worker; a sentiment that was perceived as a positive by another rural respondent who said it allowed him or her to work more directly with families “due to the nature of ‘knowing everyone's business.’” (Respondent, January 2012). One urban respondent asserted that a greater level of support might exist within rural settings “as families help other families” (Respondent, January 2012). Community size was also noted as a possible reason for poverty presenting itself differently in a rural setting. Two rural respondents reported smaller-scale issues in rural settings while another said there is a difference in the level and type of poverty in a rural setting. This difference in poverty presentation was also noted by an urban respondent who said, “poverty looks different in the city, more crappy apartments to move to and from, access to a larger amount of services, you tend to be able to blend in a bit more and flee to different districts/charter schools when the school/court gets on you” (Respondent, January 2012).

Question number 16 asked respondents to write in what kinds of effects (positive, negative, or neutral) they believe a school's community setting has on students living in poverty. Of the 18 responses, 12 were positive, 6 were negative, and no neutral effects were reported. Of the positive effects reported, respondents from a rural setting were more likely (5 to 1) to report their school as a safe, caring, or supportive environment. One rural respondent noted that a positive of a smaller school is that kids get more attention and help while kids at a bigger school may fall through the cracks. On the other hand, one urban respondent reported the diversity of the student population as a strength within his or her school. Community collaboration was noted as being essential to work with students in poverty from 2 rural respondents, and a sense of community activism was listed as a strength by an urban respondent. As for the negative effects of a school's

community setting, one rural respondent noted a low-income neighborhood has less services available in the community, while another rural respondent reported that students living in poverty have “a lesser image in the eyes of the community at large.” From the urban perspective, crime, substandard housing, substance abuse, and neighborhood drama were all reported as negative effects from the community setting.

Lastly, question number 17 asked the respondents to provide any final thoughts they had regarding school social work practice with students living in poverty in rural or urban community settings. A total of 5 respondents (2 Rural, 3 Urban) responded to this question. The first rural respondent provided a list of problems faced by the students in his or her practice including, “increased levels of depression/mental health, increased levels of addiction, poor support systems, attendance/truancy at an elevated risk, [and] transportation issues” (Respondent, January 2012). The second rural respondent noted the dichotomy of wealth at the school in which he or she practices saying that in a school with both significant affluence and significant poverty, “It's difficult for those living in poverty to constantly be exposed to the affluence of other students” (Respondent, January 2012). Of the urban respondents, the necessity of school social workers working with students in poverty was stressed. Also, another urban respondent question the attribution of discrimination and prejudice to academic failure and bullying. Instead, he or she asserted that poverty has a greater effect than a given population or minority stating, “I believe that oftentimes these kids have a common denominator, and that is poverty. When you're poor, it doesn't matter what color you are; life is just tough” (Respondent, January 2012).

Discussion

Challenges Faced by Students in Poverty

Although the inferential statistics did not support the hypothesis of a difference existing in challenges faced by students living in poverty in urban areas versus those in rural areas, the results of both the crosstab analysis of challenges faced by students in poverty and areas in which school social workers provided help to students do lend interesting insight into the challenges faced by students across community settings, many of which were supported in the literature review. These areas include mental health concerns, violence/aggression, and school achievement. A discussion on the influences, both positive and negative, of the school's community setting is enriched by comparing the previous research to the qualitative responses to this survey.

Looking at Table 1, an overwhelming 95% of school social workers surveyed (90.9% rural, 100% urban) indicated that mental health concerns were a challenge faced by students living in poverty in their school social work practice. Likewise, in Table 2, 100% of school social workers, both urban and rural, indicated mental health concerns as an area in which they provided help to students in poverty. These overwhelming numbers show just how prevalent mental health concerns are among students living in poverty across community settings in Minnesota. These findings are supported by The National Center for Children in Poverty (2006) statistics that 21% of low-income children ages 6 to 17 have mental health problems (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2006).

Similarly strong numbers were reported for students in poverty facing trauma and violence, with 90% of school social workers (81.8% rural, 100% urban) reporting this as a challenge faced by the students they work with, with the same percentage of social

workers reporting doing work around exposure to violence with these students (Table 1 and Table 2). Unfortunately, the questions on this survey did not specify whether this exposure to violence was at home, at school, or elsewhere. Carlson (2006) found that poverty was a strong predictor of direct exposure to school violence in a survey of middle school and high school students (p. 91-92). This is also illustrated by the 90% response rate in this survey that indicated bullying as a challenge faced by students in poverty (Table 1). Interestingly, while 81.9% of rural respondents and 100% of urban respondents indicated bullying as a challenge, a full 100% of respondents from both community settings indicated providing help to students in poverty around issues of bullying (Table 1 and Table 2). These strong numbers for both exposure to violence and bullying among students living in poverty across community setting, as supported by previous research, is extremely concerning.

In the area of school achievement, 95% of school social workers surveyed (100% rural, 88.9% urban) indicated lower academic achievement as a challenge faced by students in poverty, and an area in which they provide help to these students (Table 1 and Table 2). Hart and Risley (1995) found that family socioeconomic status was strongly associated with a 3 year-old's vocabulary growth, vocabulary use, and general accomplishment on the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale (p. 143-144). These differences in academic achievement, existing from a very young age, are prevalent among children living in poverty.

On a similar note, 100% of school social workers surveyed reported low school attendance as a problem among students in poverty in their practice (Table 1). Chapman (2003) also found that for children living in high poverty areas, neighborhood safety was

associated with school attendance (p. 11). This low school attendance, coupled with many other contributing risk factors, put these students at a disadvantage academically among their peers.

Community Factors

Community collaboration was reported as a widely used and effective intervention. 95% of respondents indicated that the school they practice in collaborates with the community. Both rural and urban respondents indicated a high level of community collaboration with outside organizations: the county, mental health providers, churches, businesses, mentorship programs, law enforcement, and youth programs. Cook and Orthner (2001) found community collaboration to be key when creating an afterschool program for children whose families received aid from TANF. The result was significant improvements in year-end reading and math tests for students who were in the program for a year, and even more significant increases for students who were in the program for two years (p. 101). The power of community collaboration as an intervention for children living in poverty has been established and is being utilized, to some extent, by a vast majority of Minnesota school social workers.

Past research has established barriers to service in both rural and urban areas, a sentiment echoed by many of the respondents. Caudill (1993) asserted that rural school social workers often feel overwhelmed, particularly working in an environment that often receives less funding than urban school systems (p. 181-182). This assertion was supported by both rural and urban school social workers. Eight respondents (5 Rural, 3 Urban) indicated that the largest difference between school social work practice in a rural setting and an urban setting is the lack of available resources in a rural setting compared

to an urban setting. This shortage of accessible resources in rural areas was a source of frustration for a few of the rural respondents: with one person reporting that he or she provides more mental health services to students because of the lack of mental health resources available in the community, while another rural respondent stated feeling like more of a generalist practitioner because he or she is not able to develop a specialization given the need for his or her services to be versatile and all-encompassing. Urban respondents empathized with the difficulties of rural practice, noting that rural practitioners probably do not have the level of school support that may be available at an urban school (such as a public health nurse). However, rural practice was not the only area reported as having difficulty accessing services. Two urban respondents also noted that, while there may be a greater number of services to access in cities, those services often come with greater restrictions, which cause difficulties for urban school social workers.

Interestingly, the rural community setting was more likely to elicit positives perceptions from both rural and urban respondents. While one rural respondent did speak of dual relationships as a problem within his or her practice, another participant reported these relationships as a positive in that it allowed him or her to work more directly with families “due to the nature of ‘knowing everyone's business’” (Respondent, January 2012). Bickel et al. (2002) reported a similar quality in schools located in rural communities in saying that if a rural community has a “sense of safety, stability, social cohesion, and shared world view,” the school community can mirror that environment and foster security, hope, and a commitment to learning (p. 103-104). An urban respondent even supported this assessment in saying that rural communities may have a

greater level of support than urban communities since “families help other families” (Respondent, January 2012). A similar sense of community and neighborly assistance was not reported within urban settings.

This research further adds to and enhances the previous research found in the literature review. However, there are many limitations to the findings because of the small sample size of 20 respondents and the use of the Minnesota School Social Workers Association membership list for sampling. Further research is needed in order to establish findings that can be generalized to a greater population. Also, while this study sought to look at the differences in challenges faced by students living in poverty in urban settings versus students in rural settings as perceived by school social workers, other research may choose to focus on the ways in which these community settings work to empower students through community collaboration, accessing available resources, and playing at the strengths of each unique community setting.

Conclusion

This study sought to look at the differences that exist for students in rural settings compared to those in urban settings in an effort to gain a greater understanding of the community effects at play when working with students in poverty and enhance the school social work knowledge base to help improve and individualize the interventions used in practice. Students in high poverty areas have, on average, lower test scores and a greater proportion of below grade level readers (Fram et al., 2007, p. 316). Thus, it is important, as school social workers, to understand the community’s effects, both positive and negative, on a child living in poverty. This research’s findings on community

collaboration, community setting similarities and differences, and resiliency factors at work within communities, create implications for future policy, practice, and research.

The reported success of community collaboration, both in the findings and in the previous research, makes a compelling argument for policies that create more programs to facilitate collaboration between schools, social service agencies, mental health providers, and many other community resources to help empower students.

Unfortunately, with only 15% of respondents reporting participating in any sort of policy practice or legislative advocacy, there is a dire need for a greater number of school social workers to step forward and advocate for these policies on behalf of the students they serve.

Implications for practice involve a heightened awareness of the effects of the school's community setting on the students school social workers serve. The school's community setting, whether urban or rural, can have both positive and negative effects on children living in poverty in regards to access to available resources and community support. It is important for school social workers to recognize the barriers that exist within a community in order to more effectively work around them, and also to recognize the strengths within a community in order to utilize them to the benefit of the children they serve. It is also important to recognize that many similarities do exist in children living in poverty across community setting, including lower academic achievement, mental health concerns, low school attendance, exposure to violence, and bullying. School social workers should be aware of the far-reaching effects of poverty in any community, while also learning to work with the unique aspects of a community in order to find the best practice means of empowering their students.

Future researchers may want to focus specifically on the different ways in which poverty presents itself in urban and rural communities. Given the small sample size of this survey, a large, more focused sample may find more significant differences between community settings. Also, while this survey sought to look at the different challenges present based on community settings, many positive attributes and resiliency factors did emerge based on community setting. Therefore, it would be beneficial for future research to examine these resiliency factors more closely and see how they can be applied in other, similar communities across the country.

School social workers are entrusted with the role of working with and advocating for students living in poverty. As impoverished children enter school with both mental health and academic concerns, it is imperative that school social workers understand the many social factors that influence the mental health and academic achievement of a student living in poverty. With 42% percent of America's children living at 200% of the Federal Poverty Line or below, this research sought to further the knowledge base of school social work practice with students living in these low-income homes (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2009). The hope is that this, and subsequent research, will help school social workers improve their practice in order to empower impoverished students to greater levels of personal and academic functioning, advocating for the policies necessary to make this empowerment possible, and collaboratively create a brighter outlook for their futures.

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Appendix**School Social Worker Survey**

- 1) Are you currently practicing social work in a school setting? (If no, please disregard this survey)
 - Yes
 - No

- 2) Please indicate what grade levels are represented in your school setting: (check all that apply)
 - Elementary
 - Middle School
 - High School
 - Other, please specify: _____

- 3) Please indicate the approximate number of students in the school district you practice in:

- 4) Please indicate the approximate number of social workers in the school district you practice in:

- 5) Please indicate the population of the community in which the school you practice in is located:
 - Less than 2,500
 - 2,500 – 9,999
 - 10,000 – 24,999
 - 25,000 – 49,999
 - 50,000 or more

- 6) Do you consider the school you practice in to be located in a community that is:
 - Very Poor
 - Quite Poor
 - Neither Poor Nor Affluent
 - Quite Affluent
 - Very Affluent

- 7) What is the approximate percentage of students at your school that receive Free and Reduced Lunch? (If you do not know exactly, please provide your best guess)
 - Less than 15%
 - 15% - 24%
 - 25% - 49%
 - 50% - 74%
 - 75% or more

8) Does your school social work job description, as defined by the school district in which you practice, include working with students in poverty as one of your responsibilities?

- Yes
- No

9) Please indicate which of the following you help students with in your school social work practice: (check all that apply)

- Substandard housing

- Lack of accessible transportation

- Poor academic achievement

- Lack of accessible services

- Mental health concerns

- Exposure to violence

- Bullying

- Special Education

- Other, please specify: _____

10) In your school social work practice, do you do any work around fostering resiliency in the homes of children?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please explain:

11) Does the school in which you practice collaborate with the community to work with and empower students?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please explain:

12) Are you involved in any policy practice or legislative advocacy work?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain:

13) Do you believe that there is a difference between the roles of a school social worker in a school located in a rural community versus a school located in an urban community?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain:

14) In your social work practice, do you sometimes work with students in poverty?

Yes

No

15) Please indicate the challenges faced by students in poverty within your school social work practice: (check all that apply)

Lack of access to services

Lower academic achievement

Mental health concerns

Low school attendance

Transportation

Sexual activity

Trauma/Violence

Bullying

Other, please specify: _____

16) Do you believe that a school's community setting has any effect on students living in poverty?

Yes

No

If yes, please indicate what effects you believe a school's community setting has on students living in poverty:

a. Positive effects:

b. Negative effects:

c. Neutral effect:

17) Please provide any other comments you may have regarding school social work practice with students living in poverty in rural or urban community settings:
