Harmful educational policies are starving schools and communities of the resources needed to create fair and equal opportunities. These include policies that:
- Base funding on local income and real estate values
- Ration learning opportunities through policies like tracking
- Fail to ensure a stable, expert, experienced teaching force
- Create narrow, unengaging, test-driven instruction
- Produce instability, waste, and churn through privatization and turnaround approaches
- Fail to build on the first language of emerging bilingual students
- Use discipline policies that push students out of school and into the prison pipeline

Harmful policies impacting children outside of school
are frequently linked to a long and ongoing history of discrimination. These policies affect areas such as housing, employment, environment, safety, health care, food security, and civil rights; they often result in segregated communities of concentrated poverty, with a poor tax base and resource-poor neighborhoods.

Finding Solutions

School-centric reforms

One way to help compensate for problems of inequity is to implement evidence-based policy changes* at the school level:
- Strong Supports for Experienced, Expert Teachers
- High-Quality Pre-K
- Wrap-around Services for Students and Families
- After-school Enrichment and Support
- Adequate, Equitable and Stable Funding
- Small Class Size
- Culturally Responsive Instruction
- Early & Intensive Reading and Math Interventions
- Elimination of Tracking
- Personalized Instruction based on Relationships w/Caring Adults

Systemic reforms

Because many of the problems that poor and underserved children face are systemic in nature, we can also solve them by changing those systems:
- Employment Policies, Such as a Living Wage
- Building Communities with Racial and Socioeconomic Diversity
- Fair and Affordable Housing Policies
- Creating Communities with Accessible Learning Resources
- Access to the Best Learning Opportunities Decoupled from Parents’ Social Capital
- Ensuring Access to Nutrition and Health Care

The evidence is clear: when obstacles are removed and students are given the resources to thrive, and when families and neighbors are meaningfully included in school communities, all students learn more.

*For research explaining system-based and school-based change, see: