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The Impact of Community Schools on Education Outcomes in Knox County Schools

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An Undergraduate Thesis Presented For
Haslam Scholars Program
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

The Impact of Community Schools on Education Outcomes in Knox County Schools

Abstract:

This thesis seeks to isolate the effect of community schools on the education outcomes of students participating in the program as well as the added benefit to the community. It relies on OLS regression with state-based standardized testing results to predict the relationship of adding a community school program in Knox County. Furthermore, the Regional Input-Output Modeling System (RIMS II) generates an estimate of the economic impact Knox County schools have on the Knox County economy. Both results, interpreted alongside personal experience, highlight the policy benefits of additional community schools in a given County. This process also highlights shortcomings of state reporting of school performance and provides suggestions for future research.

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I. Introduction

The modern United States education system was conceived as a way to ensure an educated voting body and provide individuals the opportunity to improve their lives. Though this goal seems well intended, its effects were not felt equally throughout the U.S. population. Just as with many policies developed at the start of the 20th century, the American public education system furthered systematic divides between races and classes. These divides were quite evident in the urban centers of the southern United States. *Brown v. Board of Education* highlighted this divide and took the first steps in bridging it. The landmark case set the goal of providing equal opportunities in schools as to ensure more just education outcomes for students. Unfortunately, despite the court's efforts to promote equality across primary, secondary, and post-secondary education, 60 years have passed, and marginalized students still perform at significantly lower rates than their peers.

In Knoxville, Tennessee, a new strategy has been implemented to address these disparities in education outcomes. Known as community schools, both public and privately funded auxiliary services are provided to the most at-risk students as a means of mitigating the limiting factors of their education. Furthermore, the services are run at the school and strive to integrate families and the larger community into the programming. This partnership between a traditional public school and different community organizations allows for students to have both their academic and non-academic needs met daily. The entire process transforms the school into a hub for the community. Since the first community school in 2009, the program has spread to over 18 elementary and middle schools and has shown success in raising a number of key test scores for students.

In this thesis, I argue that the community schools program should be expanded in the Knoxville area. I begin by providing an overview of the literature around the disparities in education outcomes and their roots in systemic oppression in the United States. The literature review utilizes research on the aftermath of *Brown v. Board of Education*, using Charlotte's response to exemplify the history of oppression in analogous school systems. Next, I outline my methods for evaluating the Community Schools program. The evaluation methods include a district wide, school level analysis as well as an economic impact report. For the former, I will be using the TN Department of Education metrics for school population, student success, and school accountability scores. I will further outline my variables, their expected relationships, and the equations for both analyses. The economic impact report of Knox County schools will supplement the analysis and provide more insight into the usefulness of public education spending. In the results section, I provide the outputs for both analyses and discuss the significance of each. Finally, I examine the potential impact of growth of the community school program in Knoxville using the same models derived for the analysis. From these, I discuss the policy implications and expected outcomes that prove community schools should be expanded across Knoxville.

II. Literature Review

Before applying any of the analysis tools to Knox County data, one must first identify the significance of the problems in education, as well as how different marginalized groups are affected by the history of oppressive practices. This literature review uses articles centered around how Charlotte, North Carolina dealt with desegregation, as well as the long-term impact of *Brown v. Board of Education*.

The Case of Charlotte, North Carolina

To begin, Roslyn Mickelson explains the early successes of Charlotte through busing and integration policies. The schools reached ideal levels of integration and both schools in the inner-city and outside the city had equitable test scores and graduation rates. These strides towards equal opportunities in education were erased by the *Capacchione v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg* decision. The decision made it illegal to force integration based on race, citing that charter schools will naturally resolve the issue. This decision, made in 1999, rapidly resegregated Charlotte to a level not seen since 1955 (Mickelson). Mickelson's most applicable assertion is that the court case, while obviously directly detrimental to the educational outcomes of Black students, only highlighted the resegregation of schools. She explains that tracking systems, such as honors programs within middle, junior, and high schools were tools that were just as effective as segregation in limiting the success of Black students. These programs were not accounted for in the laws that limited the segregation of schools, and therefore allowed for segregation to seep back into schools. Nevertheless, before the *Capacchione v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg* decision, Black students were still objectively better off than after the decision.

Stephen Smith offers a different take on the reasons behind the success and failure of the desegregation and integration practices of Charlotte. In his book "Boom for Whom" he explains that integration had an aggregate benefit on white businesses. The benefit resulted in large part because of the city's reputation of favorable race relations. This quasi-relationship between the breaking of oppressive barriers and white business success translated into a more diverse city government. Business leaders advocated for district-based elections that resulted in the bolstering of faith in the government from the African American communities. The flourishing of Charlotte public schools, according to Smith, was due to these changes. Surprisingly, Smith also attributes

the downfall of integrated school system to white businesses. At the height of the Charlotte schools, more out-of-state businesses set up in Charlotte. These businesses did not support the integration efforts of the city. Despite their newcomer status in the community, they held enough clout to dislodge the progress made in the Charlotte school district (Smith). Smith's assertions add a new variable into the conversation of educational equality. Previously, work has focused on cultural and political interests as causes for resegregation and the apparent barriers put in place for minority students. With the findings in this book, it is apparent there are large economic factors pushed by small groups of business leaders that have had a profound impact on the education system in Charlotte. Because the main actors in this situation were from out of state, it is reasonable to assume that these tactics can be and have been used in other cities across the U.S. Smith's work ultimately gives more motive for the *Capacchione* case, and emphasizes how it hurt Charlotte's schools.

Charles Clotfelter explains why the decision explicitly caused schools to return to their segregated roots. The *Capacchione v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg* case was brought up because of an influx of charter schools in the Charlotte area. These charter schools utilized race-based scholarships to maintain an appropriate level of integration in the schools. Mr. Capacchione, a white man with a white family, saw this as unfair to his daughter and sued. This law suit banned the practice of race-based admissions. White parents with a high level of mobility then began to do what they had done for years before, send their children to schools that were predominantly their own race. This sort of resegregation is well documented, and the field generally agrees that it will come about without regulations placed on education (Clotfelter). The true injustice of resegregation is found in the conditions of predominately Black schools in Charlotte. Black students are disproportionately exposed to inexperienced teachers, have limited access to

academic resources, and have subpar infrastructure. This combination of factors limits their opportunity to learn and succeed in the classroom as compared to White students attending predominately white schools.

Adam Gamoran addresses more of the quantifiable consequences of segregation in his article. He shows how the test scores and general education environment changed after the *Capacchione v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg* case was decided. He shares how English proficiency dropped from 90% to 24% in schools that lost their ability to maintain a diverse student body through white flight. The article attributes this to the loss in funds that came from many of the high mobility White families leaving the area and taking their wealth with them. The article then touches on how magnet schools and school choice, options that are set up to be a better alternative to traditionally zoned schools, fared after *Capacchione v Charlotte-Mecklenburg*. It was found that with the introduction of magnet schools into an area, an achievement gap still existed and even widened in the city. Even schools that were open to any student, regardless of skill, maintained the achievement gap between white and minority students. However, it was found that there were positive effects on students who seldom changed schools, leading one to find the bussing of students to be a poor solution as well to the issue of segregation (Gamoran). Keeping these findings in mind, the Nashville Plan outlined earlier in this review begins to make more sense. To maximize the benefits of a diverse school while also giving students stability, local governments must enforce gradual desegregation laws.

The case of Charlotte, North Carolina allows one to see the fragility of education, and the fight to maintain any progress in helping marginalized students. Its reaction to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision resulted in diverse and high achieving schools. This held for nearly 30 years, until the landmark case *Capacchione v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg* brought the system

crashing down. Acting as an indicator of both the city's newcomer population and elected officials' feelings towards public education, *Capacchione v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg* bolstered charter schools while removing the key peace that kept them equitable to marginalized populations: a race-based admissions process. Admittedly, Charlotte's case acts as a warning, not a prediction. One must look at the broader effects of *Brown v. Board of Education* to make more robust realizations.

Brown and its Aftermath

To begin understanding *Brown v. Board of Education*, one must start with its implementation. In Charles Ogletree's review of the 40 years following the Brown decision, he paints a lackluster scene of executive support from President Eisenhower. After the Supreme court made its decision, the President followed his constitutional duty of enforcing it although personally dissenting against it. He believed it would cause social upheaval and "set race relations back 15 years (Ogletree)." These sorts of comments made apparent that the action arm of the government would go no further than the bare minimum in desegregating schools. Ogletree explains that this should not be surprising. Eisenhower began his military career in a segregated Armed Forces. When President Truman spearheaded the efforts of desegregating the army, Eisenhower pushed back every chance he could. This track record made him popular among Southern, white voters, a key demographic in his election. To ensure his approval ratings throughout his first and second term, he made sure not to step on their toes by supporting desegregation strategies. The key facts can be used to better understand the restraint of the "Brown II" decision, issued by the Supreme Court on May 31, 1955. In the decision, the Court denied the petitioners request that all desegregation be ended immediately and effectively necessitated locally headed, gradual desegregation strategies (Ogletree). The Court infamously

added that these plans be done with “all deliberate speed.” This comment, though well intended, crippled desegregation efforts through its ambiguity. It allowed for local governments to have a grotesquely long window for desegregation that would ultimately make it ineffective.

Ansley Erickson further develops the idea of policies made intentionally ineffective in her book, *Making the Unequal Metropolis: School Desegregation and Its Limits*. Erickson reiterates a point made by many scholars in regards to desegregation: “Inequality shifted form in American education.” Her point refers to how even though school segregation was outlawed, the same oppression merely changed forms. Specifically, she cites 50 oral histories to assert that how federal, state, and local policies on school placement established new structures for the same oppression. These structures obviously favored suburban development, allowing a wealth to transfer to the suburbs, leaving urban schools without the resources for students to succeed. This demonstrated the deep ties between schools, economic success, and public policy. Her most important point came with her extrapolation of the data found in a case study of Nashville to the larger United States. She states that the policy made by the city of Nashville was only partially to blame for the failure of desegregation in Nashville. The Federal enforcement was just as much to blame and lead the way for Nashville, bolstering the points criticizing Eisenhower’s treatment of *Brown v. Board* in Ogletree’s paper. Ultimately, the arguments made by Erickson outline how the effects of policy made 50 years ago still directly influence individuals today. Moreover, these are not confined to local policies, but state and national ones as well. In order to ensure a better education for today’s youth, the nation must deal with the externalities of these half century old decisions.

In “Effects of School Racial Composition on K–12 Mathematics Outcomes” the authors set out to study the extent of the damage caused by actions of local and federal education

decisions. Their findings supported the idea that schools with predominantly minority students were negatively affected by resegregation. The authors attributed this to the same factors that have been stated before, with minority students receiving less funding, limited access to resources, and inexperienced teachers. Interestingly, when schools were integrated, minority students saw large improvements and the success of white students was unchanged(Mickelson). This point must be emphasized for two reasons. First, it lends itself to the idea that money follows white students. When minority students are given access to the money associated with predominately white schools, they perform better. Second, these findings detract from the arguments against the forced integration of schools. Students who were better off do not see any loss in success. This money is both in the schools and in the neighborhoods, and the effects of having better living conditions and more access to resources greatly benefit white students. These facts stand in stark contrast with Justice Clarence Thomas' famous assertion that, "Black kids don't get smarter sitting next to White kids (Hentoff)." In order to create more equitable schools, the system must give all members of a community access to the whole of the wealth of that community, regardless of race.

Mavis Sanders explains how the wealth of a community can be used in a number of ways. She repeats the same findings, that white students have performed better in school historically because they have had more access to money. Moreover, she highlights that when a community has more disposable income, it's members able to spend more time volunteering with children and increase their involvement with the school. This has a proven positive influence on children's education. Sanders continues in her article by examining how the lack of community involvement can have a substantial negative influence on children's success. This lack of success drives a cycle that only breeds the inequality seen in many minority communities (Sanders).

These findings by Sanders add to the wealth of literature speaking out against the current system of education for its de facto segregation. However, the article does give hope for what could be if communities gave access to their wealth to all residents, regardless of race.

A landmark decision by the Supreme Court in 1973 provides insight into how de facto segregation is allowed to persist. In *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez*, the claimants argued that the property tax system of funding schools went against their fundamental right to education, as provided by the 14th Amendment. The claimants were low income families of color whose school district received vastly disparate resources as compared to their predominantly white, middle class neighboring school district. Famously, the court overlooked the intersection of race and class in the case, viewing the case as purely a class struggle. By doing this, the Court's implications were one's race no longer affected how they were treated in America. This legal precedent allowed other courts to make this assumption when deciding similar cases in the realm of education, such as *Capacchione v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg*. Moreover, the court also decided that education was not a fundamental right of an American citizen (Walsh). Again, the precedent of this was widespread consequences to at-risk populations whose educational opportunities are already unstable. Ultimately, the effects of *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* hinder the educational outcomes of both poor and minority students.

The *Brown v. Board of Education* had tremendous potential, though its results have been mixed. Its mandate to desegregate all schools was met with lethargy and apathy, resulting in future opinions and policies that allowed for segregation to exist in other forms. One major example was the movement in wealth from urban areas to the suburban areas. This loss of resources is strongly correlated with white flight and emphasizes the reality that many white

students perform better than students of color because they historically have more wealth. Mickelson seeks to address this point by emphasizing integration of race in schools. He found that marginalized students performed better, while white student's performance remained high after integration. These improved education outcomes allow for a more equitable distribution of the wealth in a community and help break cycles of inequality. With the current legal and cultural limitations on the use of solely race based integration solutions, one of the more promising leads is to generate programs that integrate based on socioeconomic status. This works around arguments regarding the over emphasis on race by focusing on the limiting factors of a low economic class. Because racial minorities fall disproportionately in lower economic classes, they would still be included. Community schools work to accomplish this goal, and their affect on economically disadvantaged students can be measured to understand their effectiveness.

Why Community Schools?

A community school is a scaffolding meant to support marginalized students in traditional public school. They operate year-round with before/ after school and weekend programs (Dryfoos). These extended hours and programing are utilized to change a school into a social center. Students are able to spend time in a constructive environment while community school administrators involve the larger community through partnerships and services. The Coalition of Community Schools, an association of around 150 entities supporting community schools, echoes this point and adds that community schools are committed to diversity and equity in a community and school (Roche et al). This commitment reveals community schools as an apparent remedy for the systemic marginalization of low socioeconomic status (SES) students outlined in the previous literature. By utilizing the unique, intentional structure of

community schools to utilize public schools for social change, cities may begin to remedy the cycles that limit social mobility.

Knoxville has already begun to implement community schools. Starting in 2010 at Pond Gap elementary, Dr. Bob Kronick, along with the University of Tennessee, began the first community school in the area. In the following nine years, 15 additional community schools have emerged. Due to the rapid proliferation of these schools, it is imperative that their effect on student's outcome be meticulously measured in order to evaluate the need for their continued growth in the community.

III. Methodology

To evaluate the benefit of adding more community schools to Knox County, I conduct two comprehensive econometric analyses of the program. The first is a regression analysis to isolate the effect of community schools on education outcomes of students. The regression analysis relies on data collected by the Tennessee Department of Education on school demographics, achievement scores, and accountability profiles. The achievement scores are measured through the annual end-of-year Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) testing scores. The accountability profiles are generated using students' performance on the Tennessee Value Added Assessment System (TVAAS) exams. These two metrics provide valuable insight into the current standing of a school due to their designations into subgroups such as economically disadvantaged and Black, Hispanic, or Native American. Below is a table of the variables derived from the TN Dept of Education database:

Table 1

Percent Economically Disadvantaged (ED)	The percent of students qualifying for free or reduced lunches
Limited English Proficiency Percentage	The percent of students whose English is below grade level
Percent Non-white	The percent of the student body that is non-white
Average Daily Attendance Percentage	The average daily percent attendance of the school.
Growth Score 2018	The TVAAS determined growth of the school between 2017-2018.
ED Growth Score	The TVAAS growth score of only the ED students
Achievement Score 2018	The overall performance of students on the TVAAS examinations
ED Achievement Score	The TVAAS achievement scores for ED students.

TN Department of Education. 2019

These datasets were refined down to 5th grade math scores on both the TVAAS and TCAP testing programs. This decision was made because they provide the most consistent data across all reported test scores. The consistency of data allows for more exact analysis. Furthermore, the use of 5th graders allows for the added benefit of attending community schools for multiple year to be included in the output effect of community schools.

The second piece of this thesis focuses on the economic impact of community schools on Knoxville using Regional Input-Output Modeling System (RIMS II) multipliers. RIMS II multipliers are generated by the US Bureau of Economic Analysis for regions varying from the entire US to the County level. These varying levels of analysis are then split into industries. There are over 350 industry RIMS II multipliers, though these can be generalized to around 40 broad industries. Each fall in line with the Bureau of Labor Statistic's NAICS codes. Each industry then has 6 multipliers, though only 4 are of interest to this study. These multipliers are the Final Demand earnings and employment multipliers and the Direct Effect earnings and employment multipliers. Final Demand encompasses all of the money spent at the end of a supply chain. It multiplies the dollar spent to represent the economic activity generated by buying from that supply chain. The Direct Effect multipliers encompass all the downstream

effects of spending that dollar. It represents how someone being paid the dollar takes it into the community and stimulates the economy. These insights gleaned from a RIMS II analysis are key to describing the benefit of adding additional community school programs in Knoxville. The results will illustrate any returns on investment and better paint the picture of the effectiveness of community schools.

The combination of these analyses provides a robust outlook on the current situation of community schools. The regression analysis effectively isolates Community School's effect on education and provides statistically significant outcomes. These outcomes are important as they account for unobserved and unknown effects that a naïve analysis might exclude. Furthermore, the inclusion of the economic impact of the Community Schools program assigns a much more realistic value added to the Knoxville community from the investment into public schools. With both of these models, more responsible and equitable policy choices can be made for Knox County schools.

IV. Analysis

Linear Regression Model

As stated in the methodology, this report uses a regression analysis to isolate the effect of Community schools on the education outcomes of students. In the regression, the economically disadvantaged growth score is set as the dependent variable with community school designation as the independent variable. Three controls, the growth score in 2018, percent of students who are economically disadvantaged, and the achievement score of economically disadvantaged students, are used to better isolate community schools' effect. Each of these controls are used to account for the already known negative effects of poverty and the current standing of school achievement. The small sample size of Knox County necessitates the small number of controls. Below are the

summary statistics of each of these variables

Table 2

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
growth_sco~d	43	2.325581	1.01702	1	4
community_~l	48	.3125	.4684174	0	1
growth_s~_l8	40	2.525	1.085747	1	4
economical~t	48	38.7	22.51193	3	88.5
achievemen~d	38	1.973684	.8849139	1	4

TN Department of Education. 2019

As shown, each TVAAS score (growth and achievement) is on a range of one to four. These scores sum up the collective performance of each student into varying level of proficiencies. On this scale, one is below expected level and 4 is mastered. The community school designation is identified as a binary outcome, either one or zero. Finally, the percent of students who are economically disadvantaged is a continues number between 0 and 100. The regression used with these variables is an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression used to minimize the regression line’s error when predicting a variable. This yields an equation that predicts how much better or worse a school will do when designated a community school. Th regression output is displayed below:

Table 3

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	39
Model	20.7371563	4	5.18428908	F(4, 34)	=	10.46
Residual	16.8525873	34	.495664331	Prob > F	=	0.0000
Total	37.5897436	38	.989203779	R-squared	=	0.5517
				Adj R-squared	=	0.4989
				Root MSE	=	.70403
growth_score_ed						
		Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
community_school		.2847756	.4758416	0.60	0.553	-.6822508 1.251802
growth_score_18		.6448029	.1128681	5.71	0.000	.4154273 .8741785
economically_disadvantaged_pct		-.0075636	.0094363	-0.80	0.428	-.0267406 .0116133
community_school_grtr3		-.3223587	.4520318	-0.71	0.481	-1.240998 .5962804
_cons		1.042664	.412718	2.53	0.016	.2039202 1.881408

TN Department of Education. 2019

This output presents a few interesting outcomes. First, it shows community schools as having a positive impact on the growth score for economically disadvantaged students. However, due to the inconsistent reporting by Knox County schools, the result is statistically insignificant. The only significant result comes from the growth score of a given school, though this result is expected as a school’s general achievement should predict the outcome of a subset of a school.

Economic Impact Analysis

In order to perform the second analysis, a quick snapshot of Knox County schools must be expressed. The Knox County school district contains 88 schools and employs over 8000 people. It operates 335 buses and serves 51,000 meals a day. All of this comes out of an annual operating budget of around \$500,000,000 which is one of the largest in the state. In the analysis, 33 different industry multipliers were applied to the Knox County schools’ budget. The most used multipliers were “elementary and secondary school” and “facilities support services.” These multipliers account for all payroll expenses as well as any maintenance done on the school. Listed below are the totals for direct effect dollars generated, final demand dollars generated, and jobs generated. It should be noted that direct effect employment numbers are derived from the number of employees in Knox County Schools as opposed to money spent by the County.

Table 4

Final Demand Dollars Generated	\$68,242,200.72
Direct Effect Dollars Generated	\$647,136,061.12
Total	
Total Dollars Generated Total	\$715,378,261.84

FD Jobs Generated Total	1723
DE Jobs Generated	12183
Total Jobs Generated	13907

Knox County Schools. 2019

The totals shown above were tabulated in a number of ways. First, each line of the budget was assigned a NAICS code followed by an industry distinction. Then, the appropriate multiplier was applied. The earnings multipliers for both direct effect and final demand were applied directly to expenditures, thus providing the total dollars generated for each category. Employment multipliers for final demand were applied to expenditures divided by one million, thus providing the number of jobs generated by purchasing things at the end of the supply chain. However, employment multipliers for Direct effect were applied to the number of people employed by Knox County Schools.

Personal Experience

These two econometric analyses reveal significant details about the effectiveness of community schools. However, they do not account for the lived experience of working with and learning from the students, parents, and educators at the schools. I have volunteered at three of Knoxville's 16 community schools over the past four years. Between Pond Gap, Inskip, and Dogwood, I have spent the most time at Inskip and Dogwood. These schools, though different in the areas they serve, first revealed to me the difference community schools can make. My best example comes from a program I helped start at Dogwood.

The first day, after meeting the 13 fourth and fifth grade boys who would be attending our weekly club, I was asked a question by one of the students. He asked, "If you go to UT, what sport do you play?" When I responded that I did not play any sports, he seemed perplexed. Both him and his classmates then discussed how they did not know one could go to college without playing sports.

Community schools expose students to moments like these every day. The small realizations made possible by community partners allow for students to grow in ways that are

immeasurable by state testing. Furthermore, by involving community members like me with these schools, community school programs allow for those untouched by historical marginalization to learn about others lived experiences. This fosters a more inclusive and diverse sense of community across a whole city. These two positive outcomes speak directly toward what the literature shows is necessary for addressing the systemic inequality that has existed in public education for decades.

V. Conclusions and Policy Implications

The analyses, literature, and personal experiences presented here demonstrate how the community school model can help alleviate disparities in education outcomes experiences by different marginalized groups. Specifically, community schools directly support economically disadvantaged students and communities, thus satisfying the literatures call to address the needs of all low SES students. Additionally, their mission to incorporate the community and become a social change center allow for the positive effects to be felt by the surrounding community. Both economic analyses of community schools show further successes of the program. The linear regression reveals that there is potential for a direct positive effect of the community school designation and better growth among economically disadvantaged students. Though statistical significance is not obtained, personal experience has shown that this connection does exist in at least the few schools I have worked with. The economic impact analysis provides more definitive proof of the effectiveness of community schools in Knox county. The \$500 million budget has a real impact of \$715 million on the county while the current spending on Knox county schools generates an additional 7000 jobs. Both outcomes underscore the importance of increased spending on schools through the addition of community school programs as its effects are enjoyed by the broader Knox county community.

This research sheds light on areas in which both the Tennessee Department of Education and Knox county school can further assist students. First, the data collecting methods of the state must be improved. One of the largest limitations of this study came from the lack of statistical significance in the regression analysis. This could have been avoided if the state amended its data suppression practices. Their decision to suppress data when it is below 1% of the state average or above 95% of the state average artificially augments any analysis performed. Outliers provide a data analyst with key points to investigate to determine any systemic reasons for the large departure from the average. Second, both the state and the county should consider community schools the first step in addressing struggling schools. It is a research grounded solution that is proven to not only benefit the students, but the community around it. In just nine years, 16 different communities have been improved by the community school program. Knox county and the TN Department of Education now have a pivotal role in expanding this opportunity to those who are still experiencing the entirety of the systemic inequality of the education system. If they opt-in to expansion, the increased education outcomes and economic activity will benefit not only students, but the entirety of Tennessee.

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