

# Persistent Poverty in Kalamazoo

## What Is it? How Does It Matter? How to Change the Social Processes that Sustain It

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# The Toll of Structured Inequality in Kalamazoo

- By nearly every measure, economic and racial inequality take a toll on the health, educational and economic well-being of our community, whether we realize it or not.
- Despite our many resources and the long-standing good work of many individuals and organizations, we nonetheless compare unfavorably to most other American cities in indicators of equity and well-being.
- Following are summary data on the prevalence and patterns of inequality in our community.
- I conclude with some thoughts from a sociological perspective on what is required to eliminate structured inequality in Kalamazoo

# Poverty in Kalamazoo in National Perspective\*

## National Percentile

33 percent of all of city residents in poverty	97 <sup>th</sup> Percentile
41 percent of all Black residents of the city	94 <sup>th</sup> Percentile
27 percent of all White (not Hisp) residents	98 <sup>th</sup> Percentile
31% of all families with children under 18	88 <sup>th</sup> Percentile

\* 2016 American Community Survey, 5 year averages for cities of 65,000 or more.

# Child Poverty in Kalamazoo:\*

## Percentile Ranking among All US Cities with at Least 65,000 People

### Percent Poor

### National Percentile Rank for Poverty

All Children:	38%	91st Percentile
White Children**	25%	93 <sup>rd</sup> Percentile
Black Children***	52%	81 <sup>st</sup> Percentile
Hispanic Children****	50%	91 <sup>st</sup> Percentile

\* American Community Survey, 2016, 5 year averages    \*\* For cities with at least 40,000 White residents

\*\*\* For cities with at least 10,000 Black residents;    \*\*\*\* For cities with at least 4,000 Hispanic residents

# Child Poverty as Related to the American Ideal of Equal Opportunity for All

TABLE 1 Adult outcomes by poverty status between the prenatal year and age five

	Income below the official U.S. poverty line	Income between one and two times the poverty line	Income more than twice the poverty line
	<i>Mean or %</i>	<i>Mean or %</i>	<i>Mean or %</i>
<b>Completed schooling</b>	11.8 yrs	12.7 yrs	14.0 yrs
<b>Earnings (\$10,000)</b>	\$17.9	\$26.8	\$39.7
<b>Annual work hours</b>	1,512	1,839	1,963
<b>Food stamps</b>	\$896	\$337	\$70
<b>Poor health</b>	13%	13%	5%
<b>Arrested (men only)</b>	26%	21%	13%
<b>Nonmarital birth (women only)</b>	50%	28%	9%

Note: Earnings and food stamp values are in 2005 dollars.

Source:  
Greg Duncan,  
Stanford University  
Pathways, winter, 2011

# Health Status of Residents of Kalamazoo City Compared to 500 Largest U.S. Cities

Question	Percent	500 City Rank**	Percentile**
• Physical health not good for at least two weeks during the past month	15%	96/500	19
• Ever been told you have coronary heart disease	7%	38/500	8
• Ever been told you have cancer	7%	41/500	8
• Felt depressed or stressed for at least two weeks during the past month	15%	71/500	14
• Ever been told you have asthma	12%	26/500	5

\* Age-adjusted, model-based estimates from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – [CDC.gov/500cities](https://www.cdc.gov/500cities)

\*\* Higher is better.

# Life Expectancy in Kalamazoo County

## Black-White Gap at Birth

- **Kalamazoo: 5.4 years gap** - black-white gap in life expectancy at birth
- **US: 3.6 years** - black-white gap in life expectancy at birth
- **White Life Expectancy: 78.8 Years**
  - Equal to 52<sup>nd</sup> in world ranking
    - 51 Bahrain
    - **52 Kalamazoo (white)**
    - 52 Chile
    - 53 Cyprus
- **Black Life Expectancy: 73.3 Years**
  - Equal to 132<sup>nd</sup> in world ranking
    - 131 Vietnam
    - **132 Kalamazoo (black)**
    - 133 Bangladesh
    - 134 Nicaragua

\* Source: National Center for Health Statistics

## Gap at Age 40 by Income Percentile

Percentile	Men	Women
5 <sup>th</sup>	72.8	78.0
10 <sup>th</sup>	74.5	81.7
25 <sup>th</sup>	77.8	82.8
50 <sup>th</sup>	82.9	84.7
75 <sup>th</sup>	84.1	88.2
90 <sup>th</sup>	87.3	88.9
95 <sup>th</sup>	89.0	89.2
	M	F
5th to 95th percentile gap	15.21	11.2
10th to 90th percentile gap	12.79	7.22
25th to 75th percentile gap	6.49	5.41

\* Source: Raj Chetty, The Health Inequality Project

# High Poverty Neighborhoods\*

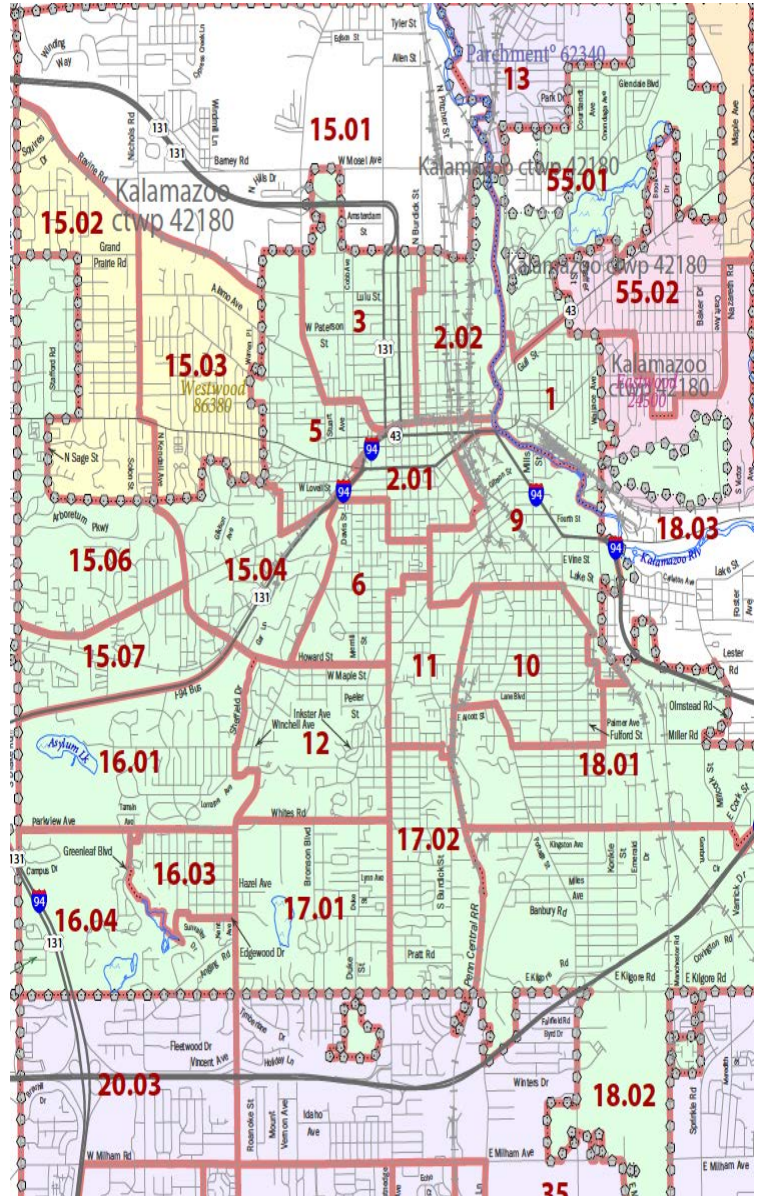
- Concentrated Poverty (not just individual and family poverty):
  - Is hazardous to health
  - Undermines education outcomes
  - Increases the risk of involvement in criminal justice system
- 11 of 21 Kalamazoo Census Tracts Have Concentrated Poverty of at Least 30 Percent of Residents in Poverty;
- 7 tracts are over 40%;
- 4 tracts are over 50%

\*American Community Survey, 2016, 5 yr. pooled estimates



# Twelve of the 21 Census Tracts in the City Have Concentrated Poverty (at least 30 percent)

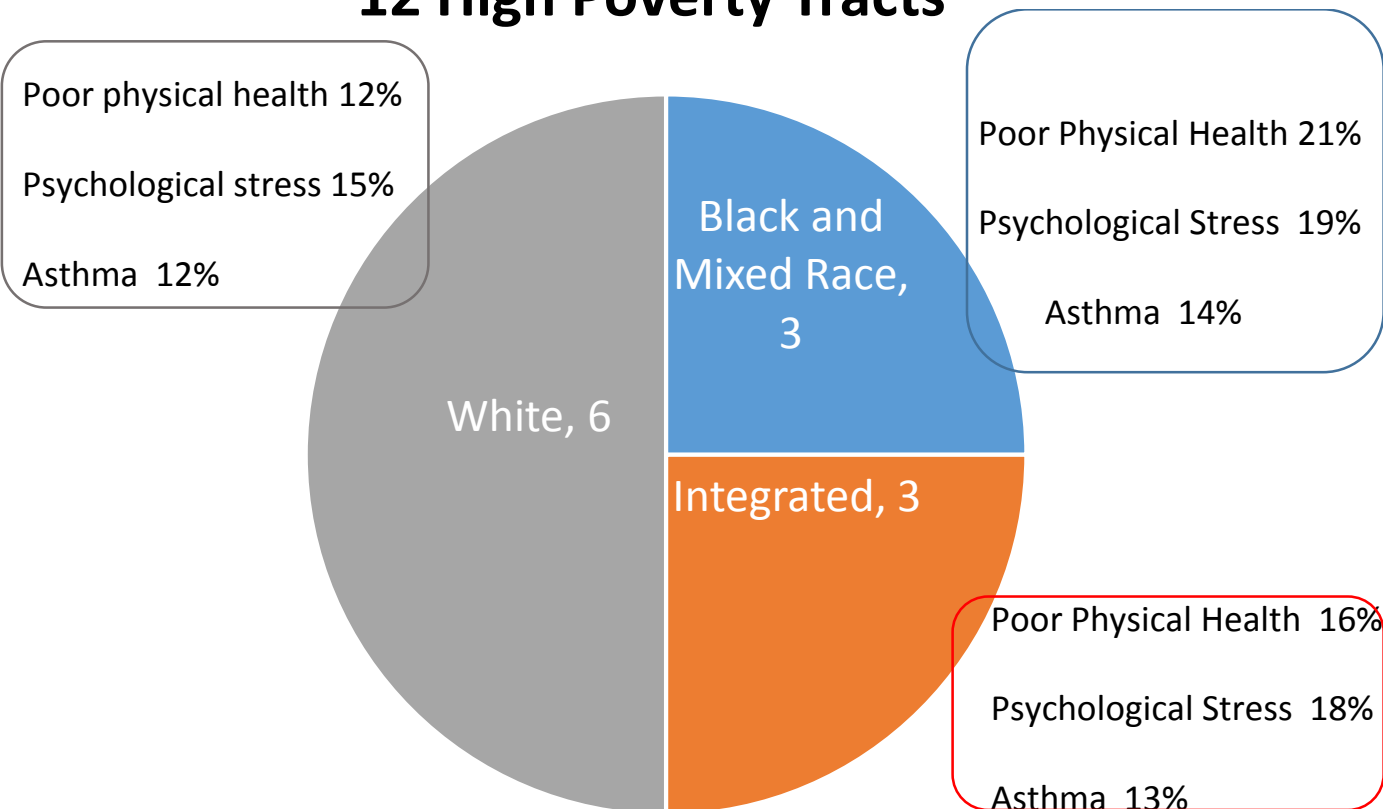
Percent of All Persons in Poverty*			
Tract 1	52%	Tract 15.06	42%
Tract 2.01	49%	Tract 15.07	65%
Tract 2.02	43%	Tract 16.01	9%
Tract 3	50%	Tract 16.03	25%
Tract 5	32%	Tract 16.04	15%
Tract 6	37%	Tract 17.01	18%
Tract 9	37%	Tract 17.02	15%
Tract 10	38%	Tract 18.01	14%
Tract 11	25%	Tract 18.02	16%
Tract 12	4%	Tract 55.01	16%
15.04	54%		



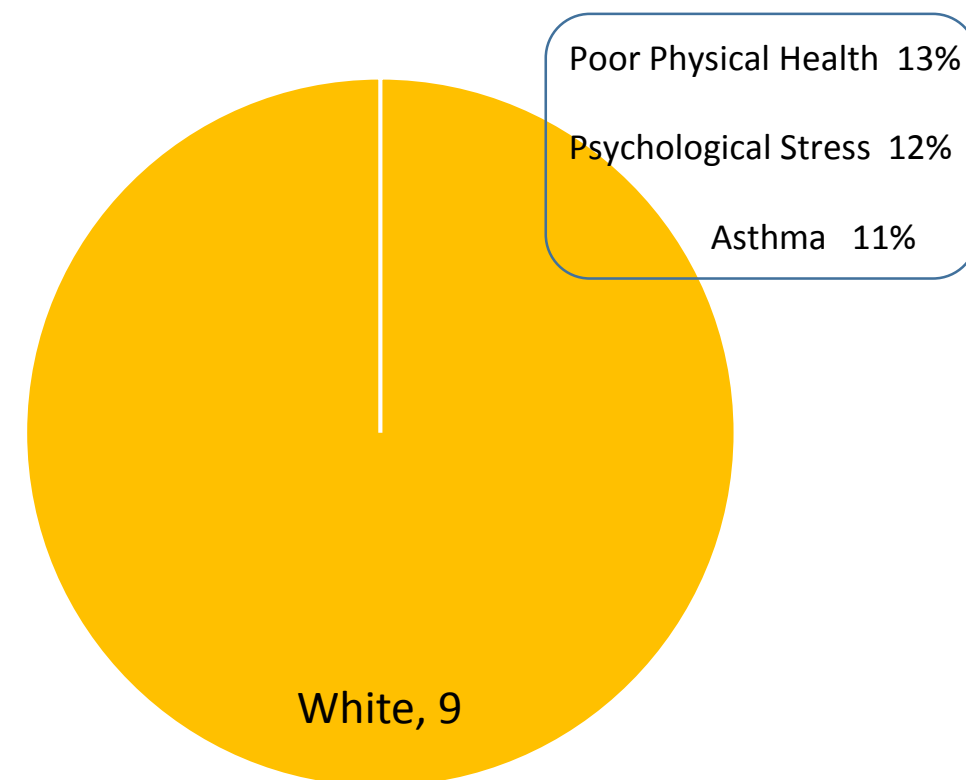
\*American Community Survey 2016, 5 yr s1701

# Racial/ethnic\* and Health Characteristics\*\*\* of Kalamazoo's Twelve High Poverty\*\* Census Tracts and Nine Non-High Poverty Tracts

## 12 High Poverty Tracts\*



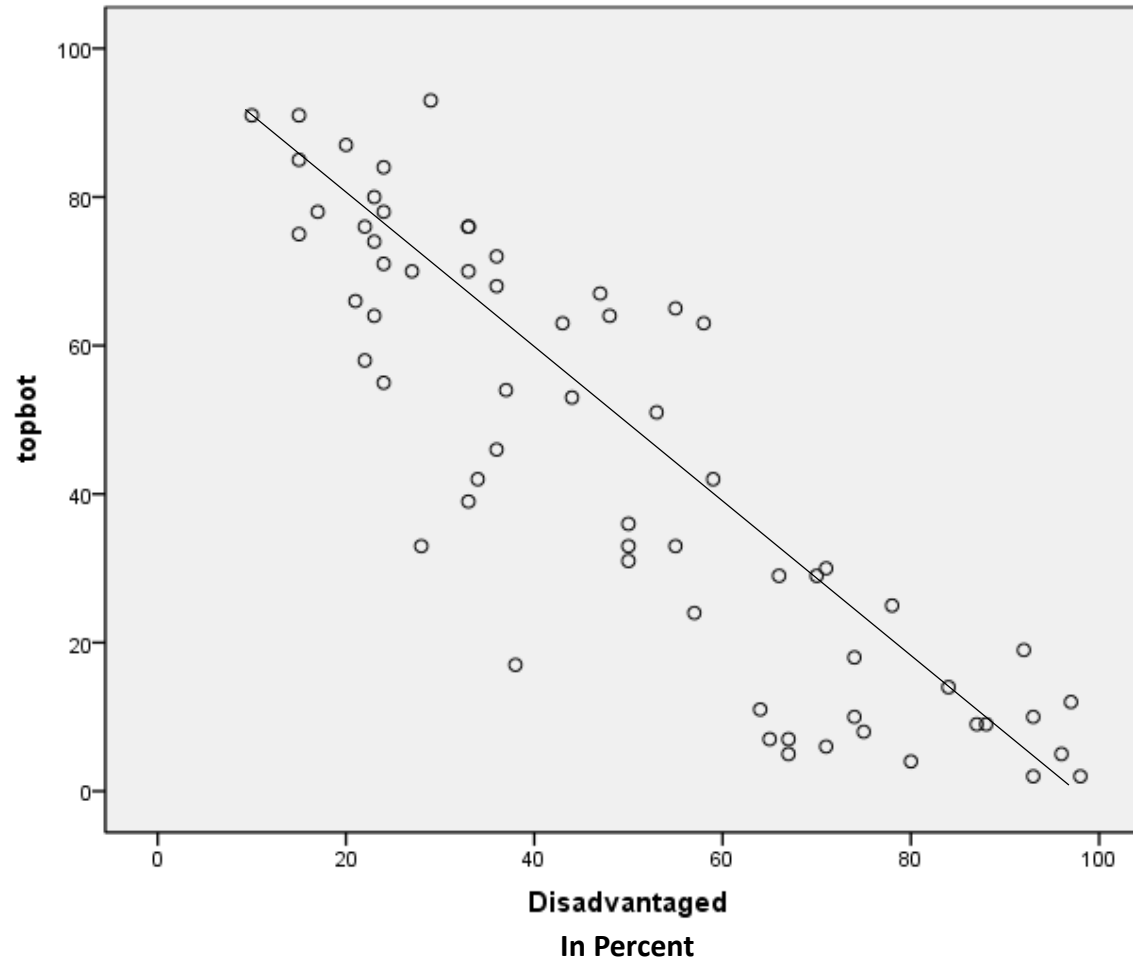
## 9 Non-High Poverty Tracts



- \* At least two-thirds of predominantly white and predominantly black/mixed tracts are composed of persons of those racial/ethnic backgrounds. In integrated tracts, fewer than two-thirds of residents are of any particular race/ethnic group
- \*\*High poverty tracts have at least 30 percent of residents living in poverty. \*\*\*CDC 500 Cities (not age adjusted)

# Top to Bottom Ranking of Kalamazoo County Public Schools by Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged Students, 2013

Percentile Ranking  
among Michigan Schools

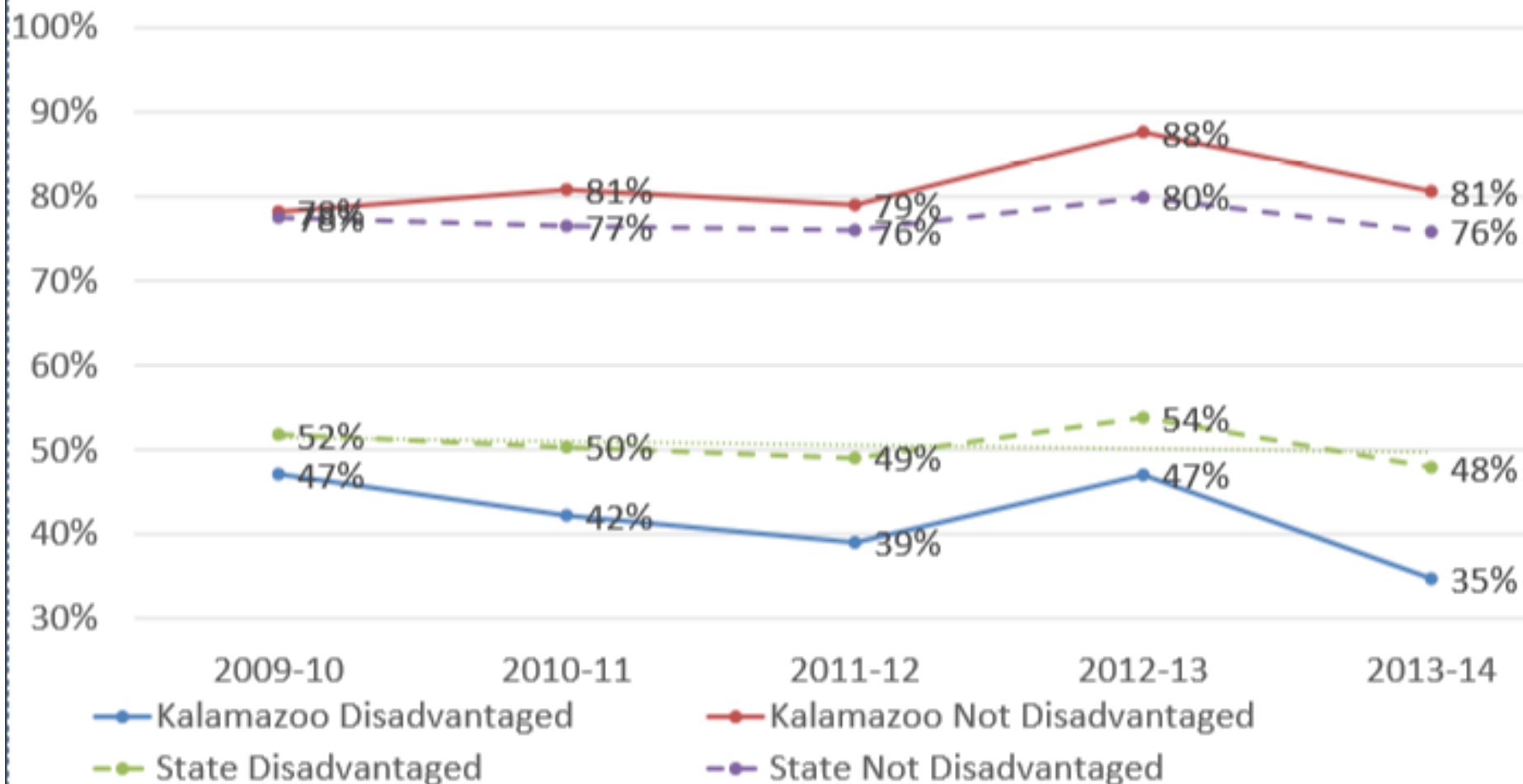


The percentage of economically disadvantaged students in a school accounts for 76 percent of the variation among Kalamazoo County public schools in the Michigan Department of Education's 2013 Top-to-Bottom Ranking of all of the state's public schools

$$R = .872$$

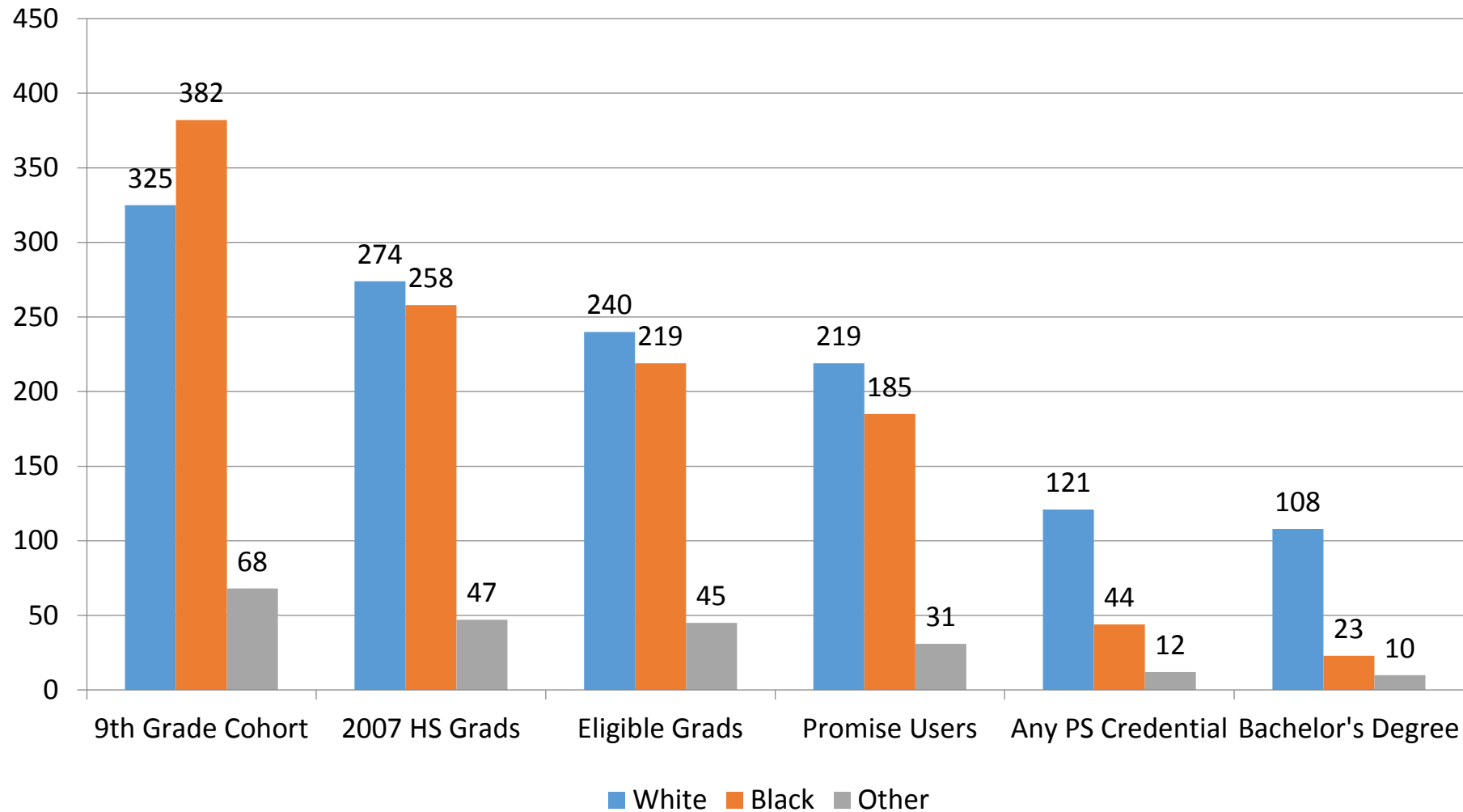
$$R^2 = .760$$

# Third Graders in Kalamazoo and Statewide who are Proficient in Reading by Economic Status\*, 2009-10 to 2013-14



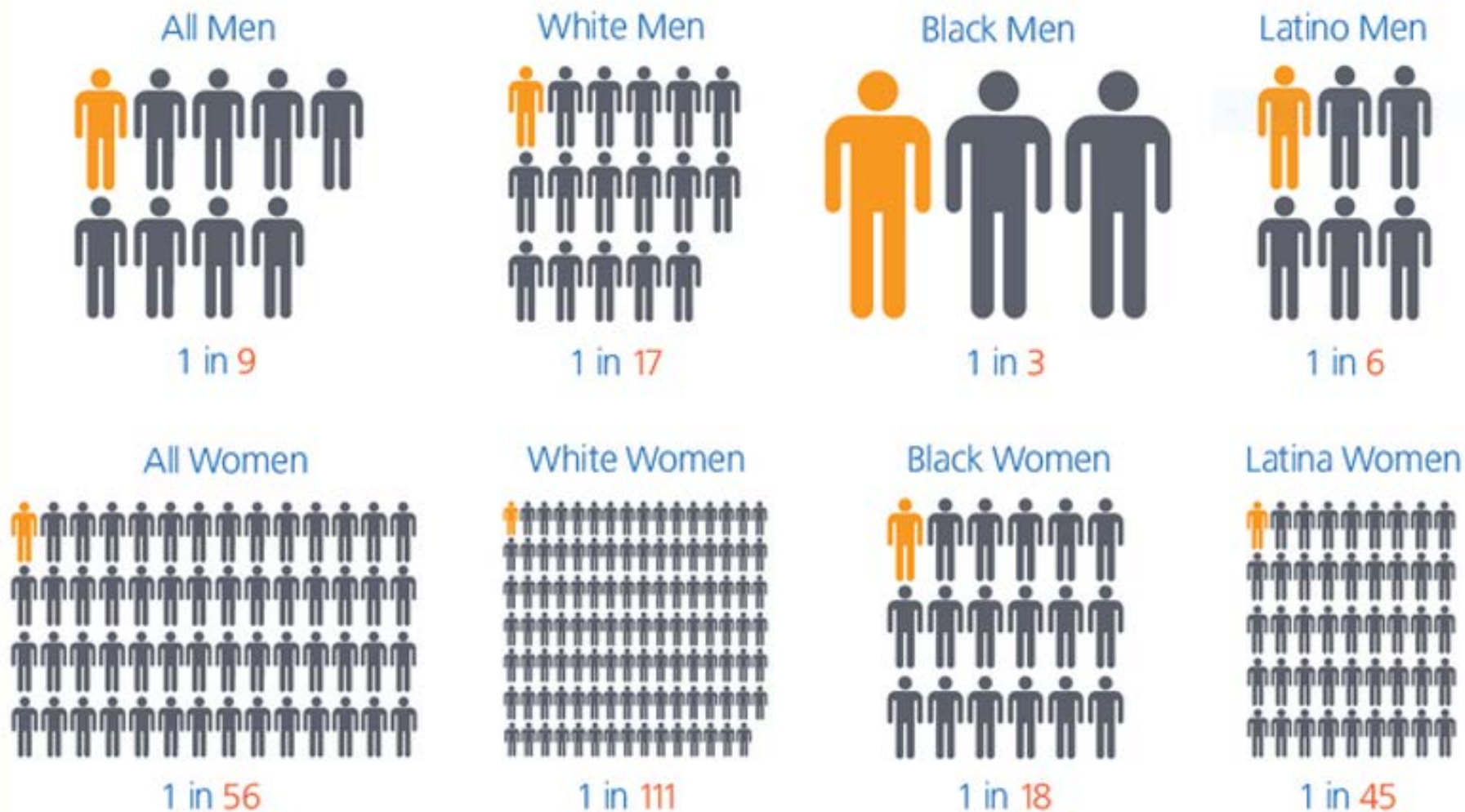
- In 2013-14, 74% of KPS third graders \* were economically disadvantaged, compared to 51% statewide.
- Walker Institute tabulation based on data from : Michigan Department of Education <https://mischools.org/>

# Continuum from Ninth Grade Cohort of Kalamazoo Public Schools in 2007 to Post-Secondary Degree Completion, as of December, 2013

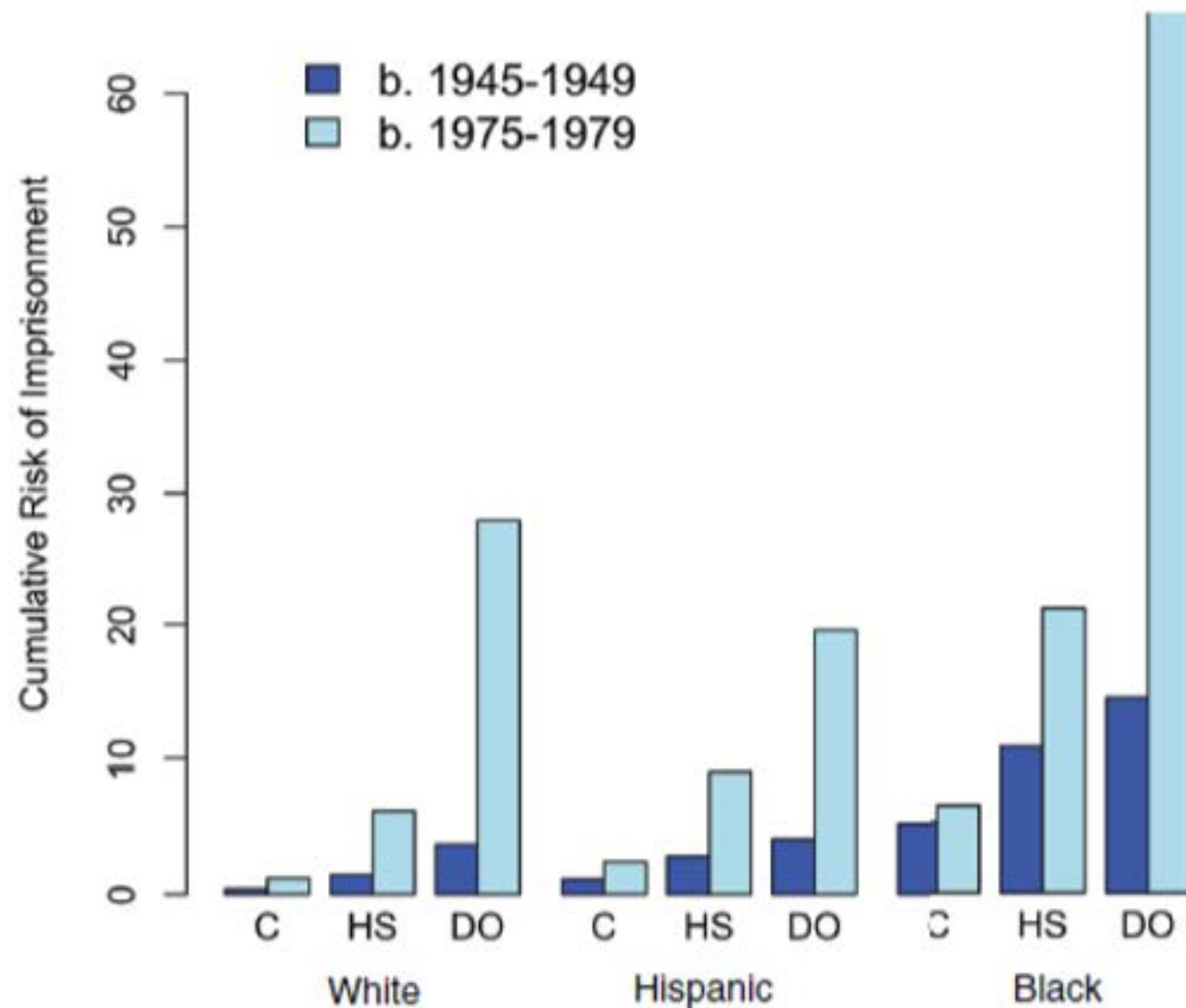




## Lifetime Likelihood of Imprisonment



Source: Bonczar, T. (2003). *Prevalence of Imprisonment in the U.S. Population, 1974-2001*. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics.



From "The Rise in Incarceration in the United States," National Research Council, 2014

FIGURE 2-16 Cumulative risks of imprisonment by 1979 for men born in 1945-1949 and by 2009 for men born in 1975-1979, by race and education.

NOTES: C = at least some college; HS = completed high school or general equivalency diploma (GED); DO = no high school diploma or GED.

SOURCE: Data from Pettit et al. (2009, Table 37).

# The US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty\*

- 12 percent of US Children are persistently poor (in poverty for more than half of their childhood years)
  - 5% of white children persistently poor
  - 40% of black children persistently poor
- Predictors of Persistent Poverty
  - Living in High poverty, disadvantaged neighborhoods
  - Parents with low education levels and inconsistent involvement in workforce
  - Parent with a disability

\*Escaping Poverty: Predictors of Persistently Poor Children's Economic Success, by David Ellwood. The US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty, based at The Urban Institute and is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation



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# Additional Young Adult Outcomes for Persons Who were Persistently Poor as Children

- Only 16 percent consistently connected to employment or education
- Academic and cognitive gaps thought to be attributable, in part, to toxic stress related to early childhood poverty

# Matthew Desmond – Severe Deprivation

- Policies to help persons just below or just above the poverty line should be different from those who are severely disadvantaged.
- Public policy in recent years has been geared more toward the near-poor at the expense of those in serious deprivation.
- Severe Disadvantage is characterized by:
  1. Persistent Poverty
  2. Deep Poverty
  3. Compounded Hardship that often includes
    - a) Addictions
    - b) Incarceration
    - c) Violent victimization
    - d) Other forms of toxic stress

# Severe Disadvantage in Kalamazoo

- About 10% of Kalamazoo families are in **deep poverty**--have incomes less 50 percent of the federal poverty line
- The high poverty rate that persists even during the economic recovery suggests a high rate of **persistent poverty**.
- Evidence of prevalent **compounded hardship** includes:
  - Kalamazoo is above the 90th percentile for violent crime among US cities
  - Kalamazoo County has the highest rate of reported child neglect of any urban county in Michigan
  - The rate of involvement in the juvenile justice system for black children in the County is the highest in the state

# What Would Mobility Out of Poverty Look Like?

- Economic Success
- Being Valued in the Community
- Power and Authority

Source: "Restoring the American Dream: What Would It Take to Dramatically Increase Mobility from Poverty?" By David Ellwood, Chair, US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty, 2018

# Proposed Strategies\* of the US Partnership for Mobility Out of Poverty:

- Change the Narrative
  - no blaming the poor for their problems,
  - no rags to riches stories as proof that success only depends on personal initiative
  - No retreat to victimhood
- Create Access to Good Jobs
- Ensure that Zip Code is Not Destiny
  - reform juvenile justice, affordable housing, better financial services
- Provide support that empowers
  - Must engage citizens as partners in change

\* Source: Restoring the American Dream, by David Ellwood

# Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo

A new campaign to promote to promote:

- the healthy growth, development and learning of all our children
- Better access to well-paying jobs
- Strong, economically secure families

With sufficient determination,  
respect, humility, will, research-  
based strategies, evaluation,  
and resources

**We have a Chance to Make a  
Difference**