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Baltimore Education Research Consortium
Informing Policy and Practice to Benefit Baltimore's Children

Poverty Definition and Use in Research

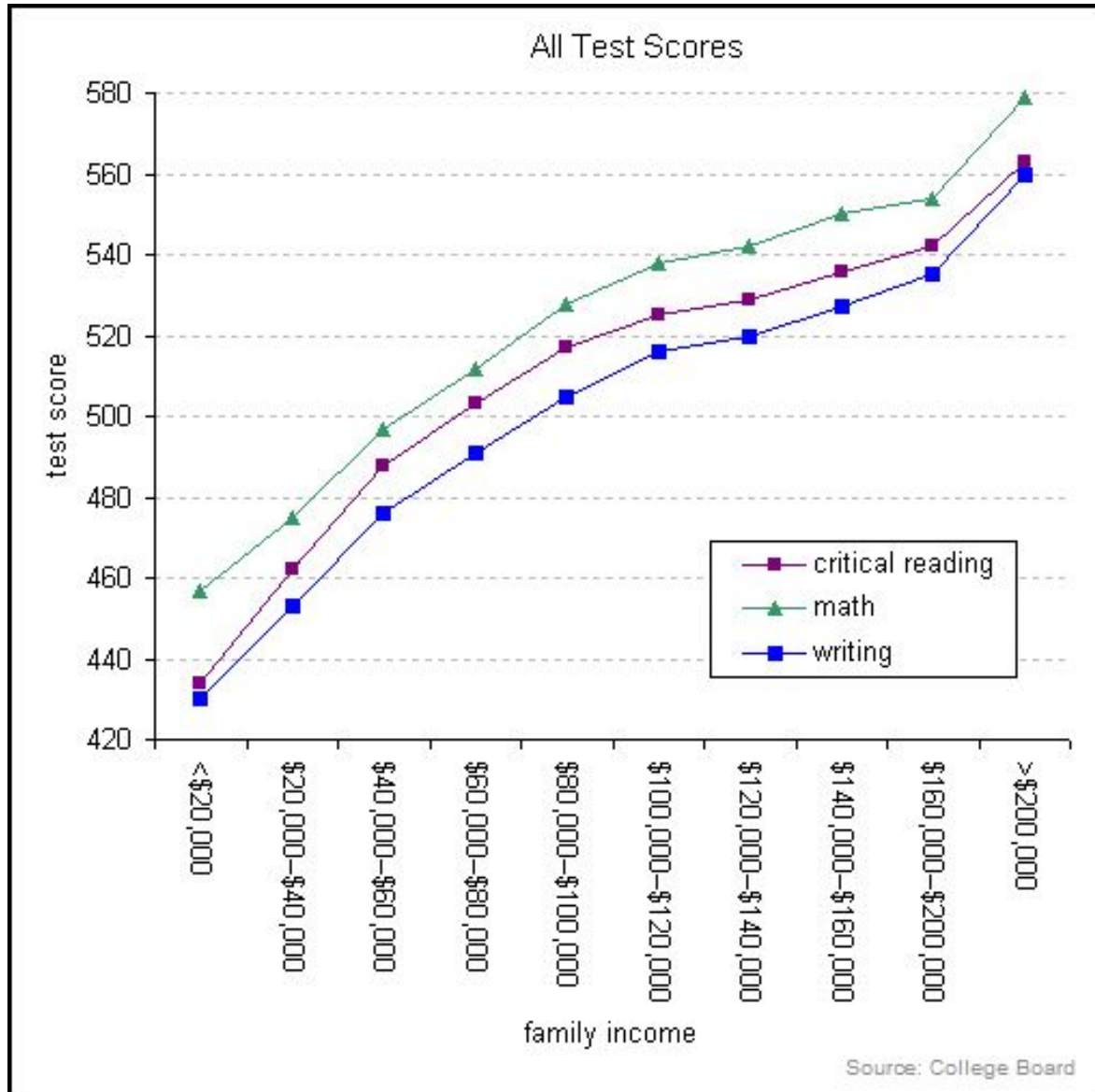
Faith Connolly, Ph.D.

Baltimore Data Day, University of Baltimore

Friday July 12, 2019

Definitions

- Poverty: the state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions.
- Wealth: property in the form of assets which can be sold and turned into cash for the benefit of the owner



Research has long established link between family income and student achievement (National SAT Scores, 2009,) [The Correlation Between Income and SAT Scores](https://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2012/08/29/the-correlation-between-income-and-sat-scores/)

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Poverty Threshold

The poverty thresholds were originally developed in 1963-64 by Mollie Orshansky of the Social Security Administration. Based on the cheapest of four food plans developed by the Department of Agriculture. The actual combinations of foods constituted nutritionally adequate diets, described as "designed for temporary or emergency use when funds are low."

Thresholds 2018

<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/tables/time-series/historical-poverty-thresholds/thresh18.xls>

Size of family unit	Related children under 18 years								
	None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight or more
One person (unrelated individual):									
Under age 65.....	13,064								
Aged 65 and older.....	12,043								
Two people:									
Householder under age 65.....	16,815	17,308							
Householder aged 65 and older.....	15,178	17,242							
Three people.....	19,642	20,212	20,231						
Four people.....	25,900	26,324	25,465	25,554					
Five people.....	31,234	31,689	30,718	29,967	29,509				
Six people.....	35,925	36,068	35,324	34,612	33,553	32,925			
Seven people.....	41,336	41,594	40,705	40,085	38,929	37,581	36,102		
Eight people.....	46,231	46,640	45,800	45,064	44,021	42,696	41,317	40,967	
Nine people or more.....	55,613	55,883	55,140	54,516	53,491	52,062	50,807	50,491	48,546

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Poverty Threshold Uses

The guidelines are a simplification of the poverty thresholds for use for administrative purposes — for instance, determining financial eligibility for certain federal programs.

<https://aspe.hhs.gov/history-poverty-thresholds>



From the National Center for Children in Poverty

The U.S. government measures poverty by a narrow income standard — this measure does not include material hardship (such as living in substandard housing) or debt, nor does it consider financial assets (such as savings or property). Developed more than 40 years ago, the official poverty measure is a specific dollar amount that varies by family size but is the same across the continental U.S.

http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_829.html#question2

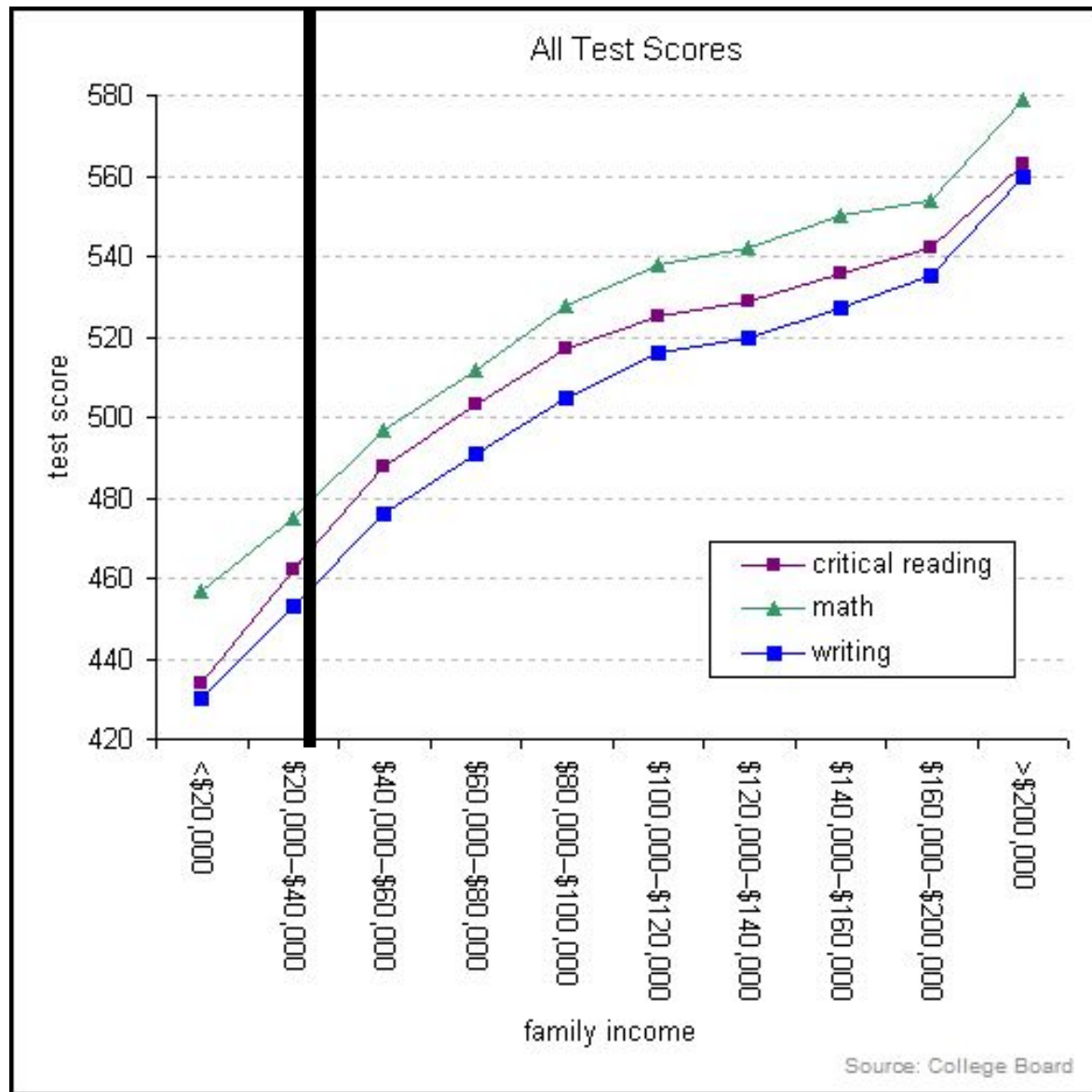
In Research - Proxy Definitions

Preferred metric is family income and household size

Easier to collect proxy measures

- FARMS: Free 1.3*poverty/ Reduced 1.8*poverty
- Direct Cert: 1.3*poverty, homeless
- SNAP: 1.3*poverty





<https://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2012/08/29/the-correlation-between-income-and-sat-scores/>

College Board's Adversity Index

- A numerical rating, from zero to 100 based on adversity experienced in a student's neighborhood and high school.
- Provide context of their socioeconomic advantages or disadvantages.
- Generated using federal education and census data about education, income, family structure, jobs and housing, as well as College Board data about college enrollment.

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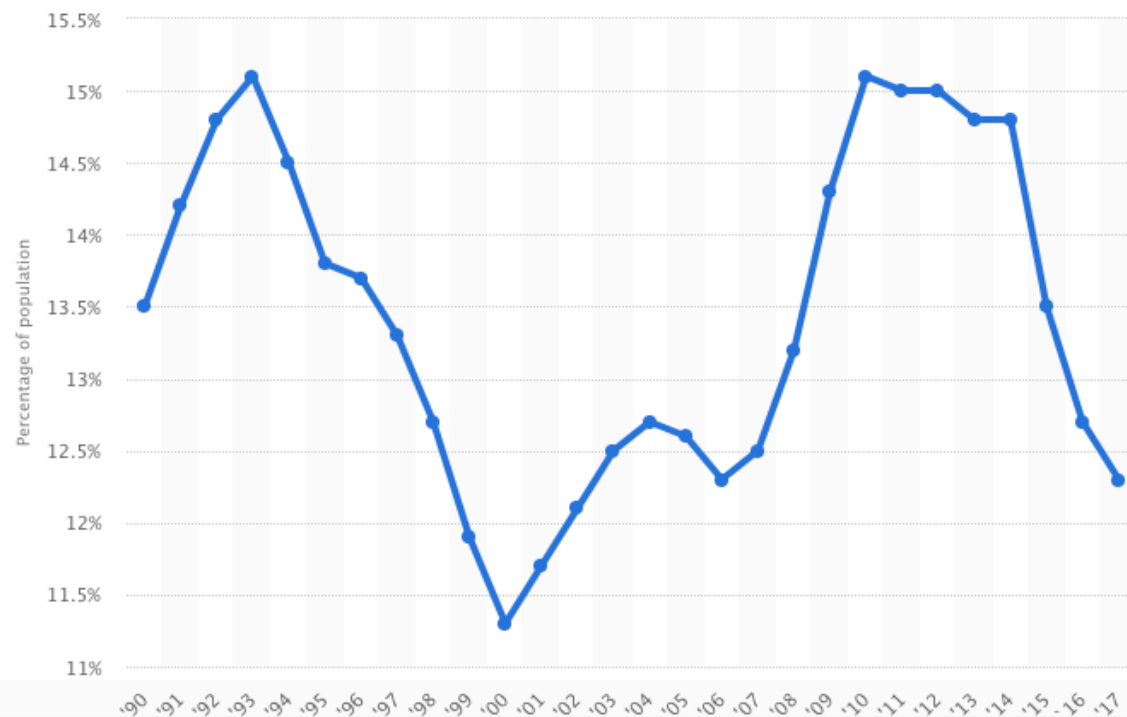
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18 NEWS

Society > Economy > Poverty rate in the United States 1990-2017

Poverty rate in the United States from 1990 to 2017



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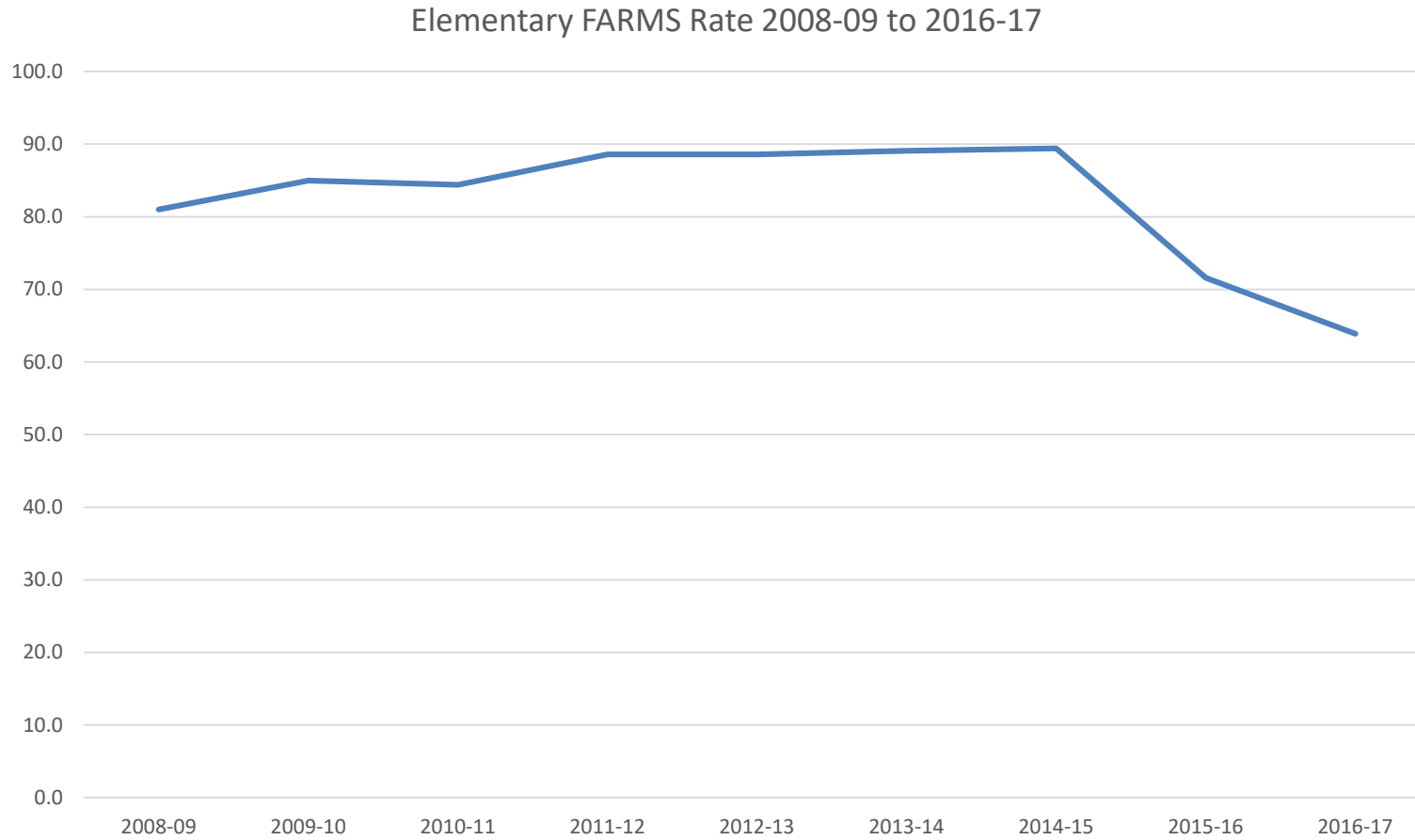
MORE INFORMATION

by Erin Duffin,

last edited Apr 29, 2019

This graph shows the poverty rate in the United States among all people from 1990 to 2017. Over 11 percent of the population were living below the poverty line in 2000. In 2017, the poverty rate was 12.3 percent in the U.S.

FARMS/Direct Cert on MDReportcard



Questions

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