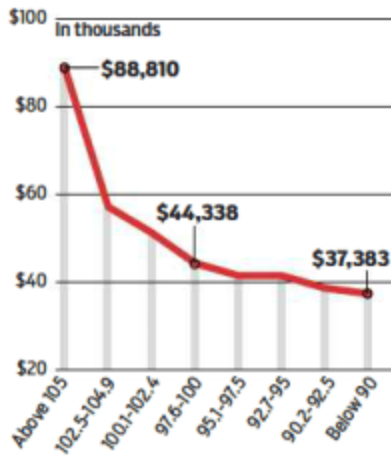


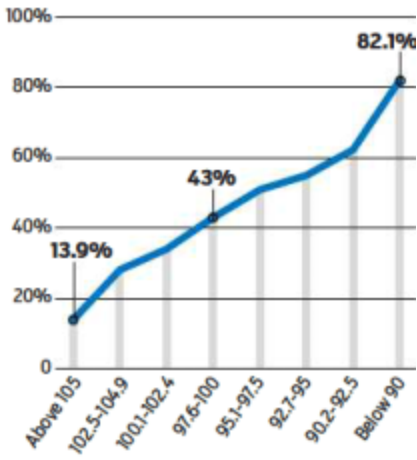
## Poverty correlation to student performance

Analysts from the Ohio School Boards Association examined the relationship between school districts' average household income, their poverty rate, and their performance index on state tests. The numbers across the bottom of the chart show ranges of performance index, with higher numbers indicating better student test scores.

### AVERAGE INCOME



### PERCENT POVERTY



Source: Ohio School Board Association

CHRISTOPHER SMITH / STAFF

## STUDENT PERFORMANCE/INCOME LEVEL CORRELATION

District	Average Ohio adjusted gross income, FY 2011	District percent of students in poverty, FY 2012	Performance Index Score 2012-13
<b>CHAMPAIGN COUNTY</b>			
West Liberty-Salem	\$45,615	24.59%	104.5
Triad	\$45,669	26.38%	96.9
Mechanicsburg	\$45,438	32.29%	101.3
Graham	\$43,705	35.19%	94.9
Urbana	\$41,358	50.03%	96.3
<b>CLARK COUNTY</b>			
Northeastern	\$48,292	27.48%	99.8
Clark-Shawnee	\$50,997	28.80%	101.4
Northwestern	\$48,888	29.15%	99.1
Greenon	\$49,084	30.99%	99.7
Southeastern	\$46,691	34.80%	101.3
Tecumseh	\$40,833	52.29%	97.4
Springfield	\$32,735	79.52%	83.2
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>\$50,623</b>	<b>47.84%</b>	<b>95.8</b>

SOURCE: OHIO SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

# Scores show income gap

State report cards reflect differences.

By **Jeremy P. Kelley** and **Jackie Borchardt**  
Staff Writers

School report cards released last month showed a near straight-line correlation between poverty and state test scores, according to data released Monday by several Ohio education groups.

Suburban school districts had the highest performance index scores, but also the highest average income, lowest poverty rate and highest concentration of college degrees, according to the analysis.

Barbara Shaner, associate executive director of the Ohio

**Report cards** continued on **A8**

## Funding may be adjusted

### Report cards

continued from **A1**

Association of School Business Officials, said the analysis presents information that should be considered as the state moves forward implementing new Common Core state standards, teacher evaluations and other education reforms.

"The numbers are pretty clear – the area where we need to see a little bit more focus are those areas where the kids are economically disadvantaged," Shaner said. "There's a clear link between their performance and their economic status."

Shaner said the new school funding formula tries to recognize that link, but the formula's impact won't be known for a few years. Shaner said funding might need to be adjusted.

"Maybe it's the way we target those students," Shaner said. "Do they need more instruction or do they need to have some of those socioeconomic issues addressed before they can do well?"

The data analysis, also sponsored by the Ohio School Boards Association and Buckeye Association of School Administrators, compared districts' performance index, a test score achievement measured by the Ohio Department of Education, with four economic indicators: average income, minority population, college degree holders and poverty rate (as measured by students receiving free or reduced-price lunch).

The lowest-performing districts – C-minus or below on performance index – have an average income less than half that of the highest-performing districts.

In Middletown, where 72 percent of students live in poverty, the teaching strategies remain the

same for all students but the interventions offered to those falling behind can vary greatly based on the student's needs, according to Elizabeth Lolli, senior director of PreK-12 curriculum and instruction for Middletown City Schools. She said a child in poverty has many needs, including access to clothing, medicine and items such as prescription glasses.

"Those are out of our realm," Lolli said. "We need the community coming together to serve those families."

Dayton's Learn to Earn effort is aiming to reduce the educational gap between economic groups by getting more disadvantaged children into star-rated preschools.

"All students can learn and excel at a high level," Dayton Public Schools Superintendent Lori Ward said Monday. "But you have to have interventions – making sure children are healthy, is there mental health care needed, and what about homelessness. There are a ton of questions that we face that you would not see in districts with higher income."

The federal poverty level is \$23,550 annually for a family of four. Students from a family of four making less than \$30,615 qualify for free lunch, and those making less than \$43,568 qualify for reduced-price lunch.

More than 94 percent of Dayton students qualify for free or reduced lunch according to OSBA data, compared with 4 percent in Oakwood and Springboro, 14 percent in Centerville, 31 percent in Vandalia-Butler, and 54 percent in Fairborn and Piqua.

Dayton Public Schools has the lowest performance index in the area, at 75.5, and Ward said poverty is just one of many factors that affect student performance.

"I don't think it's about better teachers in the suburbs versus Dayton Public Schools," she said. "A high-performing district usually takes in children who can read, who have been exposed to different opportunities ... more

vocabulary building. We have two different starting points."

Superintendents of several local high-income districts declined to comment for this story.

Springfield Schools Superintendent David Estrop echoed some of Ward's concerns about the daily food and shelter challenges that some of his students face, with 80 percent qualifying for free or reduced lunch. He acknowledged that his district has work to do, with an 83.2 performance index.

But Estrop said new "value-added" measures – which show whether groups of students made one year's worth of academic progress in a year – reflect favorably on Springfield. The district earned three A's and a C in value-added categories on the new state report card, and ranked 28th out of 814 Ohio public school districts and charters in overall progress last year, ahead of districts like Beavercreek and Oakwood.

"Our responsibility is to find out where those kids are (academically), meet them there and take them to where need to be, so they can compete successfully in the world," Estrop said.

State lawmakers revamped the school funding formula to direct some money toward districts with low-income students. The budget bill passed in June allocates \$6.61 billion for schools in 2013-14 and \$7.04 billion in 2014-15, an increase of 4.5 percent and 6.5 percent, respectively.

The formula includes an amount of "targeted assistance," which is intended to help equalize districts of differing property and income wealth. For example, the formula allocates \$19 million in targeted assistance to Dayton schools this year but none to Kettering or Oakwood city school districts, according to budget estimates.

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