

Thesis: Poverty is the greatest contributor to the ills we experience in Charlotte and throughout our nation. (Reference - Chetty Report - Charlotte is 50th- dead last among 50 major cities for helping people get out of poverty who are born in it.)

Poverty is the main cause for: 1) violence and crime, 2) homelessness, 3) health and wellness disparities, 4) housing inequities and 5) a sense of hopelessness, helplessness and desperation. Unless poverty is eradicated, the unrest in our community will continue to grow and eventually impact our economy and the quality of life for all families in our city.

Three key strategies to help dismantle poverty in our community:

1. **Solve our education crisis!** The majority of CMS students graduate every year not ready for college or a career. Most students are not meeting state standards for core academic courses and the results for Black and Brown students are disproportionately negatively impacted. The scores of students have been on an academic slide for years. Results: The workforce is lacking skilled workers and citizens can't get good jobs to take care of their families. (See attached education talking points) We must take a business, no excuses approach to solve this problem. Good leadership is imperative. Good leadership takes a little time to produce good results, but when the performance is so low, leadership that is skillful and bold can make drastic improvements in short periods of time. This can and must happen in CMS!

2. **Support systemic solutions.** Since poverty, and the ills it creates is a systemic problem, a systemic approach is necessary to break the link of poverty in our community. Community development organizations that demonstrate this understanding through actions that produce targeted results should be given the highest consideration for funding. We must support community organizations that are working to establish an evidence based model for effective, sustainable community growth and development. The key question to address is, "What eco system - system of support / conditions must be in place to move citizens out of poverty - help them to become gainfully employed. Key pillars of support for the eco system are: education - college and career readiness preparation; health and wellness, including mental health; affordable housing and workplace readiness. Align funding opportunities with strategies enumerated in the Chetty Report that support the eradication of poverty by dismantling the system that causes it. Consider funding the most important strategy within each core area.

3. **Support strategies that inspire hope and good character.** Without hope, those living unhealthy lifestyles don't even try to do any better. Even with a good education, without good character (good habits), many will still choose a bad lifestyle. Hope, a good education and good character are imperatives for producing good and productive citizens. Therefore, Faith based organizations, character development programs and mentoring programs are essential for dismantling poverty in our community. In short, inspiring hope and developing good habits in citizens open the doors for greater economic mobility opportunities. These organizations also help with the mental health challenges we face with many citizens who have been negatively impacted by poverty.