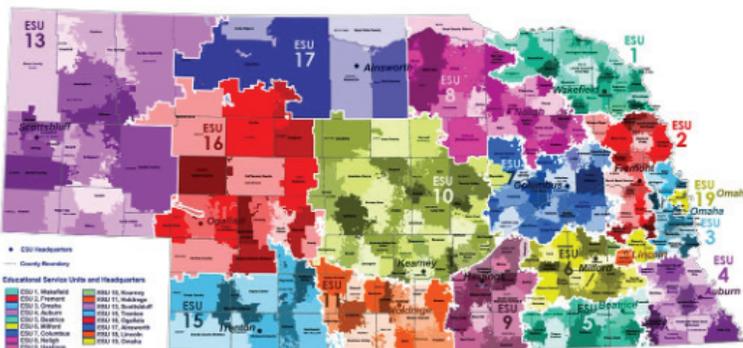


# CONNECTING POVERTY & INEQUITY WITH HEALTH & ACADEMICS

Poverty affects a student’s ability to come to school ready to learn. There is a strong and well documented link between poverty, student health outcomes and academic success. For a school nurse to fully help their students, an understanding of social barriers called Social Determinants of Health (SDOH), such as poverty, need to be recognized and acknowledged. School nurses can help families effectively navigate the resources and educate staff on the impacts of poverty for student health outcomes. This resource guide serves as a compliment to Children’s Project ECHO School Health Series on Social Determinants of Health delivered in the Winter and Spring of 2021.

## DATA

Nebraska has 330,000 public school students in 1,004 schools across 244 districts. Of those students, nearly half (46%) are economically disadvantaged. As noted in the tables below, academic outcomes of those students are significantly impacted.



**SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH**

Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.

When engaging with students and their families, consider:

- What are possible underlying barriers (SDOH) they might be experiencing?
- How do I recognize these barriers?
- What can I do to collaboratively address the barriers?

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT & ACHIEVEMENT

	All NE Students	Economically Disadvantaged
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade ELA Proficiency (2018-2019)	56%	41%
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math Proficiency (2018-2019)	47%	29%
Graduation Rate (2019-2020)	87.51%	79.7%

Source: Nebraska Education Profile: [nep.education.ne.gov](http://nep.education.ne.gov)

Economically disadvantaged are those who qualify for the free (<130% of the Federal Poverty Level) and reduced lunch program (130% to 185% of the Federal Poverty Level).

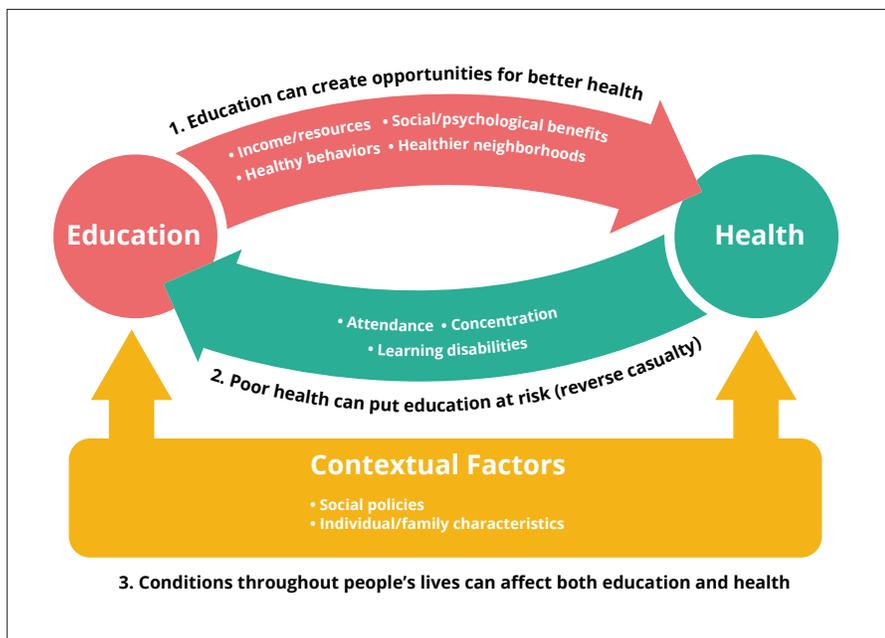
Racial Inequities also have a significant impact on Educational Attainment and Achievement.

	White	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Native American	Asian	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	Two or More Races
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade ELA Proficiency (2018-2019)	64%	30%	41%	32%	60%	55%	54%
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math Proficiency (2018-2019)	56%	19%	29%	18%	58%	49%	37%
Graduation Rate (2019-2020)	92.16%	74.93%	77.74%	71.54%	86.83%	72.72%	82.75%

Source: [health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health](https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health)

## UNDERSTAND THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF EDUCATION & HEALTH

The figure below illustrates how education protects and supports health, while poor health can negatively impact education. The yellow contextual factors are the Social Determinants of Health and can be best understood across the 5 domains in the figure on the next page.



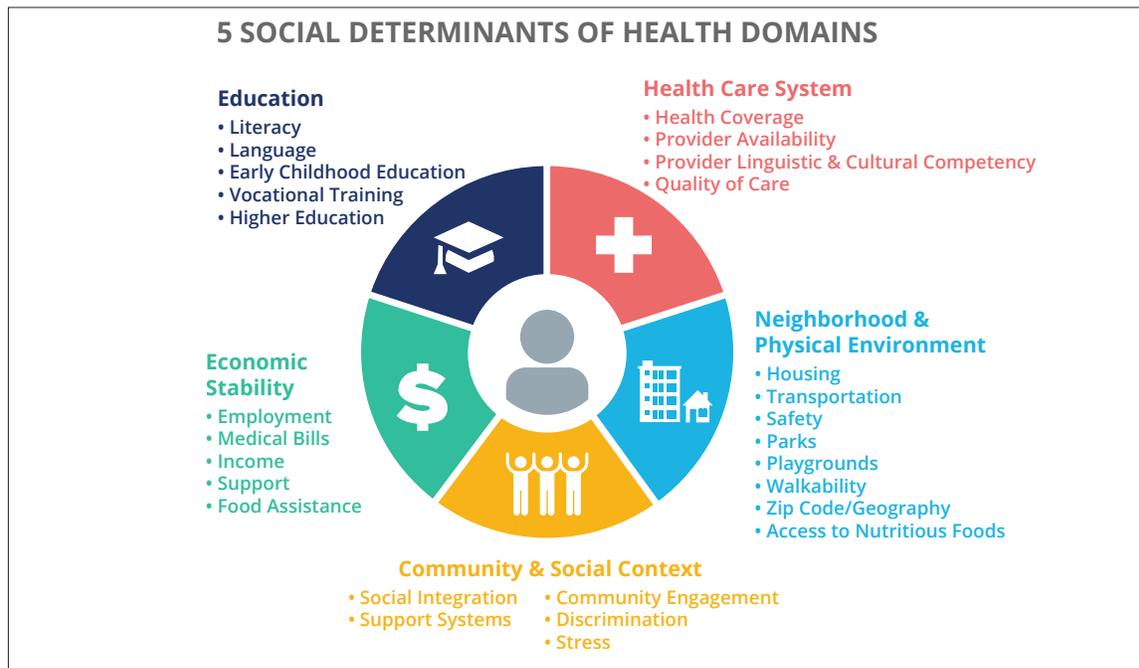
### 2020 HEALTH OF NEBRASKA STUDENTS

- 5.6% or 26,907 under age 18 have no health insurance
- 46.1% do not have a medical home
- 19.9% have not seen a dentist in the past year
- 7.2% have asthma
- 1 in 10 is not in excellent or very good health
- 13.3% of high school students are overweight

Source:

[www.kidscountnebraska.com](http://www.kidscountnebraska.com)

Source: Adapted from:  
[societyhealth.vcu.edu/work/the-projects/why-education-matters-to-health-exploring-the-causes.html](https://societyhealth.vcu.edu/work/the-projects/why-education-matters-to-health-exploring-the-causes.html)



Source: Adapted from [health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health](https://www.health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health)

## HEALTH OFFICE CONSIDERATIONS

### COLLABORATING WITH OTHER SCHOOL STAFF

- Respect the added burden that children come to school with on a daily basis
- Educate staff on how academic success is tied to health and poverty
- Educate self and staff on anti-poverty programs and resources in the community, including Medicaid, SNAP, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families
- Identify a community resource liaison – internal or external to your school - that you can reach out to with questions or concerns
- If the student has a 504 plan, ensure the school nurse is part of the planning team to advocate for economic support for the family
- Promote Economic and Medicaid assistance to families

### WORKING WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- Find a staff member that best connects with the parents or guardian to build trust and help the family access needed resources
- Form trust and build the relationship with the parents or guardian so you can ask questions related to the situation at hand
- If able, do a home visit – join with a social worker if possible; it can be helpful to see more about the home environment
- Look for shared interests and common goals with parents/guardians to support the child
- Respect parental boundaries

# RESOURCES

## LOCAL

Find and connect with your local public health department: [dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Local-Health-Departments.aspx](https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Local-Health-Departments.aspx)

## STATE

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Assistance Programs: [dhhs.ne.gov](https://dhhs.ne.gov)

- Economic Assistance: (800) 383-4278
- Medicaid Assistance: (855) 632-7633
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: [dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/SNAP.aspx](https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/SNAP.aspx)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families: Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) - provides cash assistance to low income families with children [dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/TANF.aspx](https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/TANF.aspx)

Nebraska Works: [networks.nebraska.gov/vosnet/Default.aspx](https://networks.nebraska.gov/vosnet/Default.aspx)

211 Nebraska: [www.ne211.org](https://www.ne211.org)

Kids Count Data: [datacenter.kidscount.org](https://datacenter.kidscount.org)

Nebraska Educational Profile Data: [nep.education.ne.gov](https://nep.education.ne.gov)

## NATIONAL

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Social Determinants of Health: [www.cdc.gov/socialdeterminants](https://www.cdc.gov/socialdeterminants)

*This material was developed as a compliment to the Project ECHO School Health series on Social Determinants of Health, Session 1: Connecting Poverty and Inequity with Health and Academics, presented by Kathy Brandt, Dr. Shirley Vargas and Lane Carr, on January 13, 2021. Additional resources can be found here: [www.childrensomaha.org/projectecho](https://www.childrensomaha.org/projectecho)*