We are rapidly approaching the 50th anniversary of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. In the wake of Michael Harrington’s *The Other America* (1962) and Walter Heller’s 1964 Annual Report of the Council of Economic Advisors, the Johnson Administration made the original act part of the War on Poverty. At that time according to a new calculation, 15.1 percent of American citizens were considered poor, including 26 percent of all children. Lest we forget the Johnson Administration’s faith in education, Commissioner of Education Francis Keppel (1965) remarked, “Archimedes told us many centuries ago: ‘Give me a lever long enough and supported strongly enough and I can move the world.’ Today, at last, we have the prospect of a lever long enough and supported strongly enough to do something for our children of poverty. The lever is education, and the fulcrum is federal assistance.” Title 1 of that original act funded special programs, teachers, and assessments for low-income children who were deemed to be behind in learning to read. In a sense, then, teachers of reading were to supply some of the muscle to move the world for America’s poor.

Today, U. S. poverty rates exceed the 1965 mark by a tenth of one percent overall, and 22 percent of children live below the official poverty line. Charles Murray’s *Coming Apart* (2012) captures media attention on poverty and Paul Ryan’s Path to Prosperity budget proposal is the talk of both chambers of the federal legislature. The latest iteration of ESEA, No Child Left Behind, expired in 2007, but by law, remains active until a formal reauthorization of ESEA is considered. In his
2010 State of the Union Address, President Obama echoed Keppel’s sentiment, “in the 21st century, the best antipoverty program around is a first class education.” Yet this enthusiasm for education is compromised by concern about public schooling, because on average American students score below other nations on international tests of reading (math and science) - “We have to get better faster than ever before at education” (Duncan, 2011) in order to compete effectively in a global innovation economy (Council of Foreign Affairs, 2012). To accelerate improvement, the Obama administration advocates national standards in English language arts, teacher evaluation schemes, charter schools, and national testing systems. In this way, current school and teacher practices are cast as impediments to individual and national prosperity.

As teacher educators and teachers of reading, what are we to make of these similarities and differences? Poverty remains. Education is still considered the lever. The government’s war on poverty has ended however, and schools have been positioned as the only tool and teachers the only muscle to move all students up economically, to save the middle class and to retain the United States’ position in the world economy. Reading the similarities between 1965 and now keeps us talking and working with all interested parties in order learn what “coming apart”, “paths to prosperity”, and “antipoverty” might mean today and how they could be connected to deep American commitments to equal opportunities in life (“all created equal…”).

Such reading will make us more socially competent as taxpayers, citizens, and teachers, casting us as agents within others’ plans for the future. Reading the differences, however, enables us to see that alternative futures were promised in the
past and are being promised now and that alternative places within those distinct futures can be imagined for others and for us. By pushing past the similarities in order to consider what the differences might mean, we transform our reading from consumption of what others offer us to the production of ourselves as agents of and in the work of education (Shannon, 2011). We are not simply the muscle, but also the imagination, behind that lever.

After a brief explanation that poverty – not standards, testing, or competition - remains the issue in American schools (Duncan & Murnane, 2011), I address three questions: Who are considered poor? What are the biological and social effects of poverty on school children? and What can teachers of reading and teacher educators do about poverty in children’s lives in and out of schools? Although each child living in poverty yields many heart-wrenching stories (see the Economic Hardship Reporting Project, 2012), educators are told to pay attention to systematically gathered data in order to make research-based arguments about education policies and “transformational” practices (Duncan, 2011). I intend to do just that in order to enable schools and teachers to work Archimedes’ lever to the advantage of children living in poverty.

**First Things First**

If you look at international test scores carefully, then the official rationale and directions for school reform become questionable. When Berliner (2009), Bracey (2009), and Krashen, Lee, and McQuillan (2010) disaggregated American test scores on the 2006 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS),
each found that poverty accounted for the gap in scores between American students and students from high scoring countries. Students from American schools with few students eligible for free or reduced lunch scored as high or higher than students from the highest scoring countries, and students from schools with many students eligible scored among students from the lowest performing countries. Reardon (2011) demonstrated that this gap in performance on reading tests between economic classes has grown by 40 percent since 1970. Clearly, poverty has been and remains a factor in learning to read in America.

Yet, Rowan (2011) marshaled compelling evidence that carefully designed programs can improve low-income children’s reading test scores modestly, but significantly. Often these improvements require that entire schools attend to five essential supports: professional capacity; school learning climate; parent, school and community ties; instructional guidelines; and leadership (Bryk, et al. 2010). In addition, Bryk and others found that improvements rarely took hold in schools that served the truly disadvantaged, “where palpable human needs walk through the doors virtually every day” (196). That is, even essential in-school interventions were not enough to overcome the effects of poverty for these students (estimated at over 40,000 in Chicago schools alone). To help these students gain an equal opportunity to learn to read, they hypothesized outside-of-school interventions would be needed as well.

Different levels of government do provide outside-of-school supports for income (earned income tax credit, unemployment insurance, and temporary assistance for needy families), health care (Medicare, prescription drug programs,
Medicaid), hunger (food stamps, emergency food assistance), and housing (public housing assistance). Without these programs many more American children would live below the poverty line and their lives would be much more difficult (Edelman, 2012). However, the current interventions are insufficient supports to meet the basic human needs of the truly disadvantaged. For example, 50 percent of families currently below the poverty line report food insecurity monthly (Nord and Parker, 2010). Forty-four million Americans are not covered by health insurance and are less likely to seek medical treatment when needed (Kaiser Foundation, 2011). Only 20 percent of eligible families receive federal housing assistance (Acs and Turner, 2008). And direct income support for the poor requires opportunities for employment, making it unavailable to the needy during the Great Recession and beyond when jobs of any type were/are scarce. Hungry, sick, sleepy, and stressed student have fewer opportunities of learning to read at school.

For these reasons, teachers of reading and teacher educators should keep abreast of both in-school and out-of-school interventions to support children of poverty in learning to read. While our knowledge of in-school interventions seems headed in a positive direction (Au, 2011), “the Reagan era changes to social policy - particularly changes in housing policies, income-support policies, and other social safety nets for low-income families – have made life much more difficult for low-income families. Not only do the poor have less money than they did before, they may have fewer social supports as well” (Reardon, 2011, 110). Furthermore, the arguments promoted in *Coming Apart* and Paths to Prosperity seek further limits to even the currently depleted out-of-school interventions. The consequences of this
direction in policies are felt in the bodies and minds of children and in the possibilities of teachers to provide “the best antipoverty program” in the 21st century.

Despite Song and Miskel’s (2005) discouraging findings that the International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English have little influence over federal policy, teacher educators and teachers of reading cannot resign ourselves to work harder in schools while we leave out-of-school matters to others. To do so limits our agencies to fulfill the historical role of public schools in the United States to support the upward mobility of all students (Goldin & Katz, 2008).

**Who are considered poor?**

Poverty is insufficient income to sustain one’s well being, and is typically measured in either absolute or relative terms. Absolute terms set a threshold, and then, identify who lives above or below that limit. For example, 2.8 million American children (are members of 1.46 million families who) live on less than $2 a day (Shaefer & Edin, 2012). To provide some perspective, that is the amount the World Bank uses to describe “global poverty.” The World Bank (2010) reports that such poverty is waning around the world, but Shaefer and Edin identified a 130 percent increase in American “global poverty” since 1996 (when the federal government ended “welfare as we know it”). Shaefer and Edin label these children as “extremely poor.”
The official poverty line in the U.S. is drawn at $41 dollars a day for the smallest household (one child and one adult), adding $7 a day to the family income for each additional child or one more adult. 15.2 percent of Americans (including 22 percent of all children) are labeled officially poor. In 2011, the U. S. Census Bureau reported that an additional 51 million Americans lived in households (of 4), managing on less than $83 a day (150 percent of the official poverty line). *The New York Times* labels this group as the “near poor” (DeParle, Gebeloff, & Tavernise, 2011). All tolled, 1 in 3 Americans have such low incomes that they struggle to feed, house, care for, and protect family members.

Most often relative measures of poverty identify income inequalities rather than pinpoint objective material hardships. “We are the 99 percent” is a relative measurement of poverty. In the United States, the top 1 percent of household – 1.5 million families – average $9365 in income per day (Drum, 2011). The next 9 percent – 13.2 million families – have average daily incomes of $451. The remaining 90 percent – 132 million families – average $96 of income each day. Over the last 40 years – the same time frame in which the income achievement gap has grown significantly - the incomes of the top 1 percent increased nearly 100 percent, while the bottom 90’s grew less then 10 percent. Although the bottom 90 and the next 9 percent do not compose an easily understandable class in absolute hardships, their incomes and rate of income growth are relatively distant from those in the top 1 percent. Note that these relative and absolute measures overlap – for a family of four, the average income of 90 percent of Americans is only $13 a day above the incomes of the “near poor.”
The official poverty line in the U.S. was based on the assumption that the average family spent one third of its income to feed itself and two thirds on the remaining essentials of modern life (housing, utilities, healthcare, transportation, insurance, clothing, child care, education and the list goes on). That ratio has not changed since 1964 (although it has been adjusted for inflation), and it remains the official criterion for eligibility for government support services. Although government documents report that the one/two thirds assumption was considered reasonable in 1964, the National Center for Children in Poverty (Fass, 2009) concluded that food costs are only one seventh of current family budgets with other expenses rising substantially. The NCCP estimates that, in order for families to cover monthly bills, a family of four would need approximately $110 in rural areas and small towns and $165 in cities (2 or 3 times the amount assumed by the official poverty line).

Poverty is not spread evenly across America. The South has higher poverty rates than the West, the Midwest and the Northeast (in descending order) (Ziliak, 2010), and these rates are rising in all regions (Institute of Research on Poverty, 2012). Twenty percent of city dwellers, 17 percent of rural or small town citizens, and 12 percent of suburbanites are counted as officially poor (Kneebone & Garr, 2010). Although racial segregation has been declining, residential segregation by income has increased regularly since 1980 among the 30 largest metropolitan areas across the United States (Pew Research Center, 2012). According to the U. S. Census (2011), African and Hispanic Americans are three times as likely to be poor as White Americans (27 to 9 percent), and children are two and half times more likely to be
poor than senior citizens (22 to 9 percent). Of course, these demographic categories intersect in people lives.

Stereotypes of the “generational poor” (Payne, 2005) are challenged in these Census statistics. Across all regions, White children comprise the largest number of poor children; 39 percent of poor children live in families making payments toward home ownership, 30 percent have married parents living in the household; and 72 percent live with at least one employed adult (Chau, Thampi & Wight, 2010). Poverty is rising faster in the suburbs than cities or rural areas (Kneebone & Garr, 2010).

What are the biological and social effects of poverty on school children?

The type of research I’m using to build this argument cannot speak to specific children or contexts. Rather, this research addresses poverty in terms of general tendencies and probabilities. People living in poverty are diverse individuals, who negotiate their lives in a variety of ways, and the effects of characteristics associated with poverty might not pertain to individual children. This being acknowledged, many scholars (See Duncan & Murnane, 2011) conclude true disadvantage reduces children’s opportunities and capacities to make the most of whatever happens at school. Statistically, poor children are more likely to have low birth weight, to be ill fed, to lack health care, to live in inadequate shelter, to feel unsafe and insecure, and to lack the expected dispositions and experiences for schooling. All interfere with children learning to read.
Low birth weight is set at 5.5 pounds and is associated with prolonged and serious illness (asthma) and infections (nose and throat), motor (eye hand coordination), social (externalizing aggression and/or internalizing anxiety) and cognitive (autism and lower intelligence) delays (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012). Lower income parents are twice as likely to have babies with low birth weight, and four times more likely than wealthier parents to have children with very low (3.3 pounds) or extremely low (2.2) birth weight. Lighter babies are more likely to suffer multiple complications, and the complications are more likely to last into adolescence and adulthood (Cheadle and Goosby, 2010).

Food insecurity is a regular and sustained risk of a food supply insufficient to maintain one’s health, development, and concentration. Hungry children are more likely to be ill, absent, lethargic, and inattentive. Chronic hunger among infants and toddlers is associated with slower cognitive development and lower powers of concentration that last into adulthood (Wight, Thampi & Briggs, 2010).

Lack of access to healthcare is directly and positively correlated with income (U. S. Census, 2011). Poor children are more likely to have lower rates of immunization and fewer preventive checkups for treatable illness, vision problems, or dental health. They have less access to treatments for chronic conditions (asthma, diabetes) or to mental health services (Kaiser Foundation, 2011). Consequently, they are more likely to be sick when attending school or to be absent, causing “their educational achievement to suffer (Bernstein, Chollet & Peterson, 2010).

Inadequate housing is associated with greater chance of chronic illness, colds and infections, exposure to toxins (lead and radon), sleep deprivation, and mobility
Housing costs consume more than the 30 percent of low incomes, as recommended by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (Bravve, Bolton, Couch & Crowley, 2012), and therefore, low income housing is more likely to be older, drafty and cramped, to need repair, and to be located in less safe neighborhoods.

*Toxic Stress* is the continued activation of the genetically coded response system that prepares the body to engage temporal environmental challenges (Wilkerson & Pickett, 2009). Stress activates the nervous system and specific hormones that raise heart rate, breathing rate, blood pressure and metabolism, enabling an individual to take on the challenge with enhanced focus, strength, stamina, and alertness until the challenge ends. Continued activation of the stress system, however, is toxic to the human body and disposition, leaving the individual feeling overwhelmed, weakening her immune system, and causing long-term degradation of cognitive functioning. Children living in poverty are more likely to demonstrate the physiological symptoms of toxic stress daily, even when there is no apparent challenge in their environment (Evans and Schamberg, 2009). As poverty persists through childhood and adolescence, the symptoms become more acute, suppressing working memory (Noble, Norman & Farrah, 2005; Farah and others, 2006), influencing the structure of the brain (Nelson & Sheridan, 2011), and limiting the genetic expression of individuals (Nisbett, 2009). These consequences disrupt logical thinking, behavioral control, language comprehension, and reading.

In *So Much Reform, So Little Change*, Payne (2008) argues that social factors as well as biological factors inhibit the potential impact of school reforms for
children in poverty. Segregated low-income communities have fewer institutional resources, fewer employment opportunities, and less social cohesion, which demoralize families and paralyze their civic actions. Toxic stress and lack of resources affect family life. Poor children are less likely to be supervised, to talk with adults, to engage in literacy events, and to participate in academically enriching events and contexts in and outside the home (Phillips, 2011). These parenting styles and uses of time limit poor children’s readiness for typical school curricula and subsequent academic achievement. As Heath (1983) and Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) demonstrated decades ago and Compton-Lilly, Rogers and Lewis (2012) explained more recently, however, these effects reflect as much on schooling and research epistemologies as they do on the potential of families living in poverty.

Statistically, low-income families are more verbally and physically violent, less cohesive, and less stable (Sedlak et. al., 2010). Poor children are more likely to be exposed to smoking, drinking, and drug abuse, and they are more likely to live among people who believe themselves to be socially powerless (and act according those beliefs). Members of low-income communities are less likely to trust and rely on others or feel secure when in public (Sastry & Pebley, 2010). Even if these consequences are not present in their family life, poor children learn to negotiate these practices and these environments in a variety of ways in order to be recognized as members within families.

Poverty takes a toll on children’s bodies and minds and shapes their behavior in ways that interfere with their learning to read at school. This is not an excuse (Sanchez, 2011), but a research-based conclusion that children living in poverty are
more likely to be in need of medical treatment, to be hungry and tired, to be absent, to suffer from cognitive and physical delays in development, to possess a smaller vocabulary and to lack expected general and school experiences, to exhibit disruptive behavior/sullen disposition, and to suffer less working memory and lower gene expression due to prolonged toxic stress.

**What can teachers of reading and teacher educators do about poverty and its effects?**

Among those who regard poverty as a major social problem, the conventional view is that we should respond by declaring a new “war on poverty,” then introduce initiatives that would lower the poverty rate, and thereby reduce the poverty rate in the U. S. However sensible such an approach may seem, there are real political hurdles that in the U. S. context make it difficult to take on poverty in any concerted way, and one might therefore focus additionally on measures that reduce the negative effects of poverty among those experiencing it. (Collaboration for Poverty Research, 2010)

The Collaboration for Poverty Research (CRP) is a joint effort of the Stanford and Harvard faculties to address poverty from a scientific point of view. This quote, however, suggests that science does not necessarily determine governmental policies (Shannon, 2007). Note that the CRP wants to read the difference between the 1960s and now imaginatively (a new war on poverty), but advises reading for competence as well (measures that reduce negative effects). Accordingly, teacher
educators and teachers of reading should focus “additionally” on interventions to reduce the negative effects for individuals, while we work in society to eliminate true disadvantage in America. The latter is necessary, if we intend to provide equal opportunities to learn to read for everyone who walks through the school doors.

*Interventions in schools* begin with the expectation that every child can learn to read with appropriate support from teachers and peers (Paratore & Dougherty, 2011). All children have learned some language, have experience bases, and have acquired ways of speaking and acting as effective family and local community members (Gee, 2001). Those memberships and ways of being are core elements within their identities and form the basis for learning to read in different contexts (Heath, 1983; Teale, 1986; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988). With this disposition, teachers of reading are prepared to push the notion of opportunity to learn to read from expecting all students to profit from simple, directed exposure to a single curriculum to understandings that equal opportunity means adjusting their curriculum in order that its affordances provide a variety of starting points for differently prepared students (Gee, 2008). In this way, teachers of reading should rephrase the political metaphor for school reform from Race To The Top to You Can Do It/We Will Help You.

What might these adjustments include? To be considered successful school readers, students must acquire the school’s answer to the question, “what is reading for?” (Cambourne, 2002). All students have already developed functioning theories that answer that question in their homes and communities, but schooling is a new context with distinct answers from those previous contexts. (This is probably a
problem). Reardon (2011) accounts for the widening income achievement gap with the fact that middle and upper class families use increasing amounts of resources to prepare their children for schools’ answers. To intervene in order to reduce the effects of poverty, teachers of reading must decide what their answer might be, and enact it clearly for their students through their practices, curriculum, and uses of time and space (Cole & Griffin, 1983; Handsfield, Crumpler & Dean, 2010). Bryk and others (2010) concluded that the coordination of this answer among teachers and school personnel is essential to increasing students’ reading test scores, and “we know that children are more engaged in schooling when they feel in control of their own learning, are actively participating in the learning process, are interested in the topic being studied, and are able to respond to the challenge before them” (104).

*Practices* demonstrate reasons for learning to read in ways that permit students to construct theories about how they and others will use oral and printed language in schools (McIntyre, 2011; Rogoff, Paradise, Arauz, Correa-Chavez & Angelillo, 2003). Teacher talk, reading aloud, and assignments should call out to students that school language is used for learning about themselves, others, and the world; finding pleasure in language, stories, and social relationships; establishing routines for problem solving and order; and developing rituals for community and caring (Johnston, 2012). Learning to read at school, then, contributes to dynamic personal, social, and academic identities that complement and expand students’ current theories about reading, learning to read and themselves as readers. School personnel’s commitment to these practices across time enables the identities to thicken (McCarthy & Moje, 2002).
Curriculum invites students to engage in learning, finding pleasure, establishing routines, and developing rituals through reading in ever more sophisticated ways (Maniates & Mahiri, 2011). It’s the what, when, and how of the invitation for every student to take up the whys of reading, and it’s the true test of whether or not a teacher of reading embraces the expectation that everyone can and will learn to read. Even subtle exclusions from pursuit of the why convey a lack of confidence in and to students (Johnston & Costello, 2005). Some students might need more supports for the tasks at hand, and they all will need choice words (Johnston, 2004) and effective feedback for their approximations that helps with their emerging theories of reading at school and of themselves as school readers (Orellana, Reynolds & Martinez, 2011).

The Uses of Time and Space display the importance of reading within a context (Heath, 1983). If learning to read is not a “race,” then time becomes a resource. Teachers of reading can devote enough time for students to learn, find pleasure, establish routines, and/or develop rituals at some level every day across all subjects (Malloy & Gambrell, 2011). And if it’s not a competition, then students can help themselves by using all available tools – books, people, technology, and even the walls (Lindfors, 2008). Teachers of reading can use space to make these tools accessible and not isolate students’ bodies from them. Students will accommodate these uses of time and space at different speeds and different levels, according to the ways in which they have used time and space in the other settings available to them.
Working in society to eliminate true disadvantage begins with the recognition that the United States is not exceptional when it comes to equal opportunity. In fact, the Economic Mobility Project (Isaacs, Sawhill & Haskins, 2008) found that America is the most class bound society among Western nations. Although some children of poverty and low income move to the middle class and above, they are most likely to follow in their parents’ footsteps because in school and out of school resources are not available as tools to enable them to work their way out of their economic class. We can work smarter in classrooms, but out-of-school factors that must be addressed, if we are committed to the reality as well as the rhetoric of America as the land of opportunity. Teacher educators and readers of reading can work with others to level the playing field for all students, relieving many of the reasons for toxic stress and enabling all students to take advantage of school reforms.

What forms might this work take? A first step, perhaps, is to read poverty as if it weren’t inevitable or chosen, imagining how life could be different for children. With just this brief primer on poverty and its effects, we know enough to ask questions about why poverty is allowed to persist and to participate in the deliberations about what can be done about it. Our participation will necessarily be political because, as the Collaboration for Poverty Research concluded, some people with power choose not to accept the research-based conclusions about poverty, its effects on children, and America’s economic immobility. Political participation takes clarification of issues, mobilizing groups for support, and plans of action. I offer four examples.
Taking care of pregnant women begins with effective sex education and available contraception. Two-thirds of Americans favor reproductive health services and counseling through private and public plans, affording women appropriate care before, during and after pregnancy (National Women’s Law Center, 2010). Nutritional services should be included because mother’s weight gain and health are highly correlated with infants’ low birth weight and complications (Shore, 2003). That means supporting and extending federal Supplemental Food Programs for Women, Infants and Children. Planned Parenthood and National WIC Association advocate for these programs locally and nationally. The National Conference of State Legislatures (2012) estimates the annual cost of low birth weight babies at $26 billion dollars a year. In 2011, Planned Parenthood received $316 million in federal funds for 800 clinics across the nation, and WIC’s budget was $7 billion for 9 million participants. Increasing the funding to include all eligible Americans would still save 2 dollars for each invested, while making the lives of millions of mothers and children better.

Finding a format for universal healthcare expands the near 50-year commitment of Medicare to all citizens, declaring health care as a human right – not a choice or a privilege (Moyers, 2012). According to a NPR poll (February 2012), 60 percent of citizens in Massachusetts appreciate their state’s version of a universal healthcare system. A health system with universal access would educate Americans about public health, provide preventive care, reduce worry about untreated illness, prevent crushing medical bills, and bring America in line with every other advanced country. Healthcare NOW advocates for HR 676, a bill for a single payer privately
run national system, and Physicians for a Nation Health Program argue that such a system would pay for itself by eliminating the administrative and advertising costs of insurance companies, drug companies, and hospitals.

*Providing childcare and early childhood education for every child* begins with acceptance of advances in neuroscience, molecular biology, and genomics conclude that early experiences are built into our bodies and that safe and stimulating early environments lead to healthy contributing adults (Shonkoff & Garner, 2011). Currently, 73 percent of four-year-olds and 50 percent of three-year-olds attend American preschools, with less than 50 percent of poor and low income four-year-olds taking advantage of public preschools (Barrett, 2010). According to the Pew Center on the States PreK Now Initiative (2011), Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, the National Association of Elementary Principals, and teachers unions favor the extension of public schooling to preschool years for the benefits to children served, the futures they will make and enjoy, and the multiplier effect of preschool investment on the U.S. economy ($2 to $4 for each dollar invested Rand, 2005).

*Working against income-segregated communities* means finding ways to increase families’ purchasing power. To boost family income, governments could detach Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and the Child Tax Credit from work requirements until the effects of the Great Recession recede (many governors and the Obama Administration favor this measure); retain the full Earned Income Credit for families (invented by Milton Friedman) with two or more children until they are well beyond the poverty line; and increase the minimum wage to $10 per
hour (restoring the 19 percent decrease in purchasing power since 1968).

According to a Zogby Analytics Survey (June 2012), seven in ten Americans favored such acts to enable poor and low income families to participate more fully in the economy, and therefore, to attract more public and private services to their communities – schools, libraries, fire and police services, medical services, grocer
drug stores, and others. The Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago (2011) found that a $2 increase in the minimum wage would result in a nearly $3000 increase in spending per family. U. S. Senator Tom Harkin’s Rebuild America Act includes that provision.

Combining in-school supports for poor and low income children with social action to increase out-of-school supports to abate toxic stress honors the origins of ESEA. As every president from Johnson to Obama has recognized, education with federal assistance can be the lever and fulcrum to move the world for children of poverty. With the evaluation of teaching being tied to students’ achievement, efforts to help poor and low income children are in our personal interests; however, such efforts are more than personal; they are moral commitments to human dignity and political acts of social justice. Teacher educators and teachers of reading can play a fundamental roles in this work, continuing to improve their teaching according to research findings and insisting that government officials do the same for their responsibilities outside of schools.

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