

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **Handout 2A: Education and Poverty**

Directions: Review the following material. On a piece of butcher paper, use pictures, symbols, drawings and the information presented on this handout to illustrate the link between education and poverty.

<b>United States Education</b>	<b>Estimate of Median Earnings</b>	<b>Poverty Rate</b>
Less than high school graduate	\$19,404	28%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	\$27,024	14.3%
Some college or associates degree	\$32,401	10.8%
Bachelor's degree	\$49,157	4.5%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, S1501. Bureau of Labor Statistics, College Enrollment and Work Activity of 2012 High School Graduates.

The more education a person has, the less likely he or she will live in poverty. The poverty rate among people who earn a college degree is much lower than the poverty rate among people with only a high school diploma. Those who earn a high school diploma do much better than those without one. Over 49% of recent high school drop outs are now jobless. People who leave high school without a diploma typically do not have the skills they need to earn above the minimum wage.

Several factors stand in the way of ensuring that all Americans have access to a good education. Studies show that high-poverty schools have fewer teachers qualified in their subject areas, larger class sizes, and rank among the worst funded in the nation. Also, students who attend them tend to move a lot – often because their parents are moving from job to job. High school-age students often feel pressure to help support their families by taking jobs, leaving little time to keep up with school work and earn a diploma. So, although a poor education may result from poor individual choices, individual circumstances often place major obstacles to receiving a quality education.

It's not just what kids are learning in school that matters. What goes on at home also matters. Students who live in poverty are less likely to attend preschool, less likely to read at home and learn basic skills, and they often enter the educational system behind other students. While work supports for parents, such as childcare and transportation assistance, often lead to increased student performance, living in poverty means it's difficult to catch up.