



Stu Silberman is the executive director of the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, a citizens' advocacy group. An educator for 37 years, he was most recently the superintendent of Fayette County schools in Kentucky. Follow him on Twitter: @stusilbermanfc and @prichardcom.



Lack of Funding for Interventions

By [Stu Silberman](#) on March 19, 2014 11:50 PM |

Erin Brummett is a 2013-14 [Hope Street Group Fellow](#) and is a sixth grade math teacher at [Lloyd B. McGuffey Sixth Grade Center](#) in Stanford, Kentucky.

I am a mathematics teacher where I work with special needs and struggling students. My school has 310 students, 86 percent of which are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch.

I have seen first-hand the impact that decreasing education funding has had on the students in my classroom. Of the 310 students who entered the 6th grade this year, more than 125 students tested below the 50 percentile on the end-of-5th-grade test. The reasons so many students are struggling academically are numerous and varied. Regardless of the reasons, the fact remains that these students need support to achieve in the sixth grade. Unfortunately, we can't help them all.

Due to decreases in funding over the past several years, the number of students who can receive intervention services at my school is capped at 40. How do you tell a parent that their student struggles in mathematics, but the school is unable to provide much assistance outside of the regular classroom because there is not enough resources? The system is failing these students and creating pockets of students who are destined to be low-achievers because the school does not have the resources or manpower to support these students to reach their full potential. Teachers are told to close the gap. How do I close the gap with struggling learners when there aren't enough seats to meet the needs of all the students with below-grade level skills?

In addition to teaching special needs students and assisting struggling students with interventions, I have twin four-year-olds who both have special needs. Both girls have [Speech Apraxia](#), which basically means that the brain does not tell the mouth how to work. Having two girls who need such a drastic amount of support in school has made me realize even more the critical nature of full funding for education. My girls are likely to struggle every day as they move through kindergarten and beyond to learn and keep up with the demands of the classroom, even as they struggle to say their own names. It pains me to think that their potential will not be realized and that their learning will be squashed as a result of not enough education funding for the school to provide the wide support that my girls will need and deserve.

A lack of funding for education means that the community in which I live will continue to be poor. I want more for my students. Students deserve better. They deserve to not rely on welfare checks, food stamps, and other

government hand outs. They deserve to be able to live in a warm house, put fuel in their vehicle, and buy necessities.

A lack of funding for education means the majority of my students face a bleak future unless drastic changes are made now.