

**High Poverty Schools  
and the Distribution of  
Teachers and Principals**  
(forthcoming NC Law Review)

**Charles Clotfelter, Helen Ladd,  
Jacob Vigdor, Justin Wheeler**

Contact: Helen Ladd

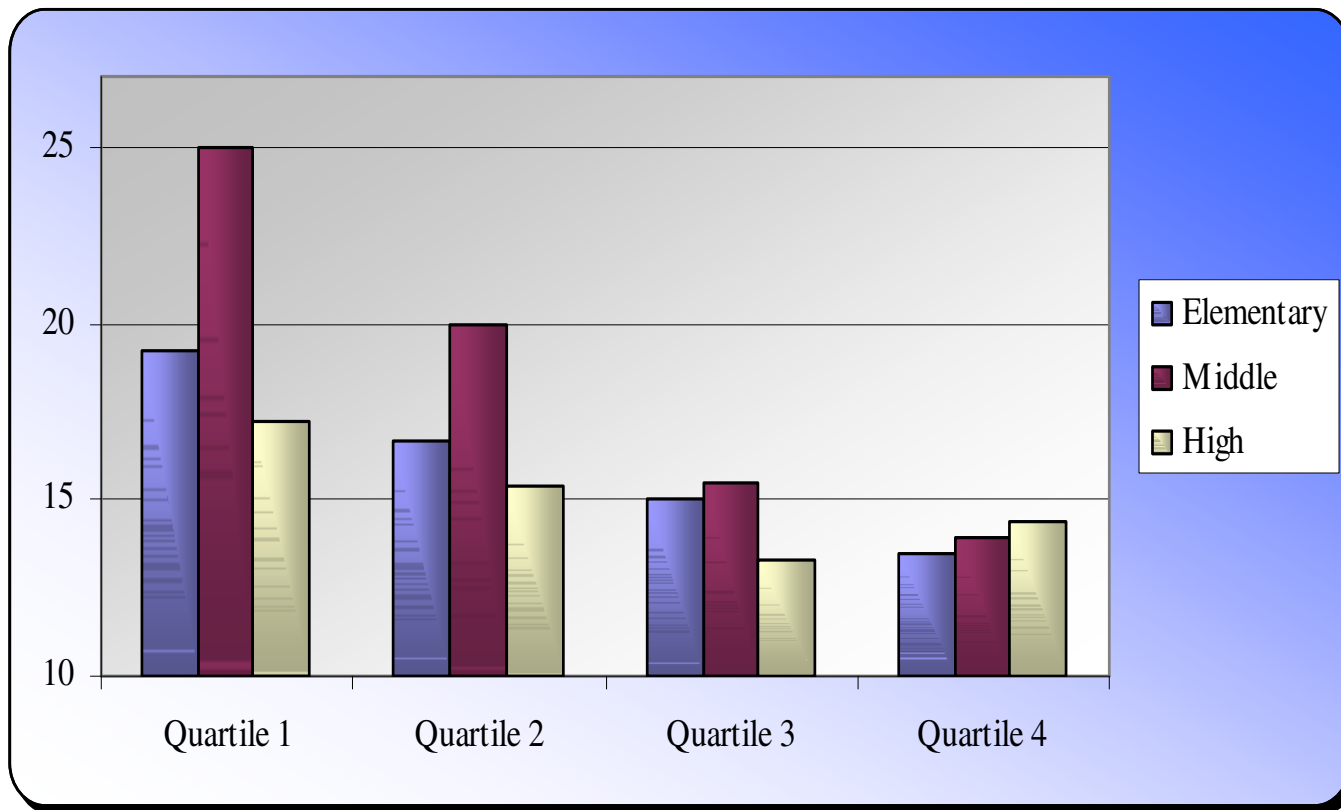
Hladd@duke.edu



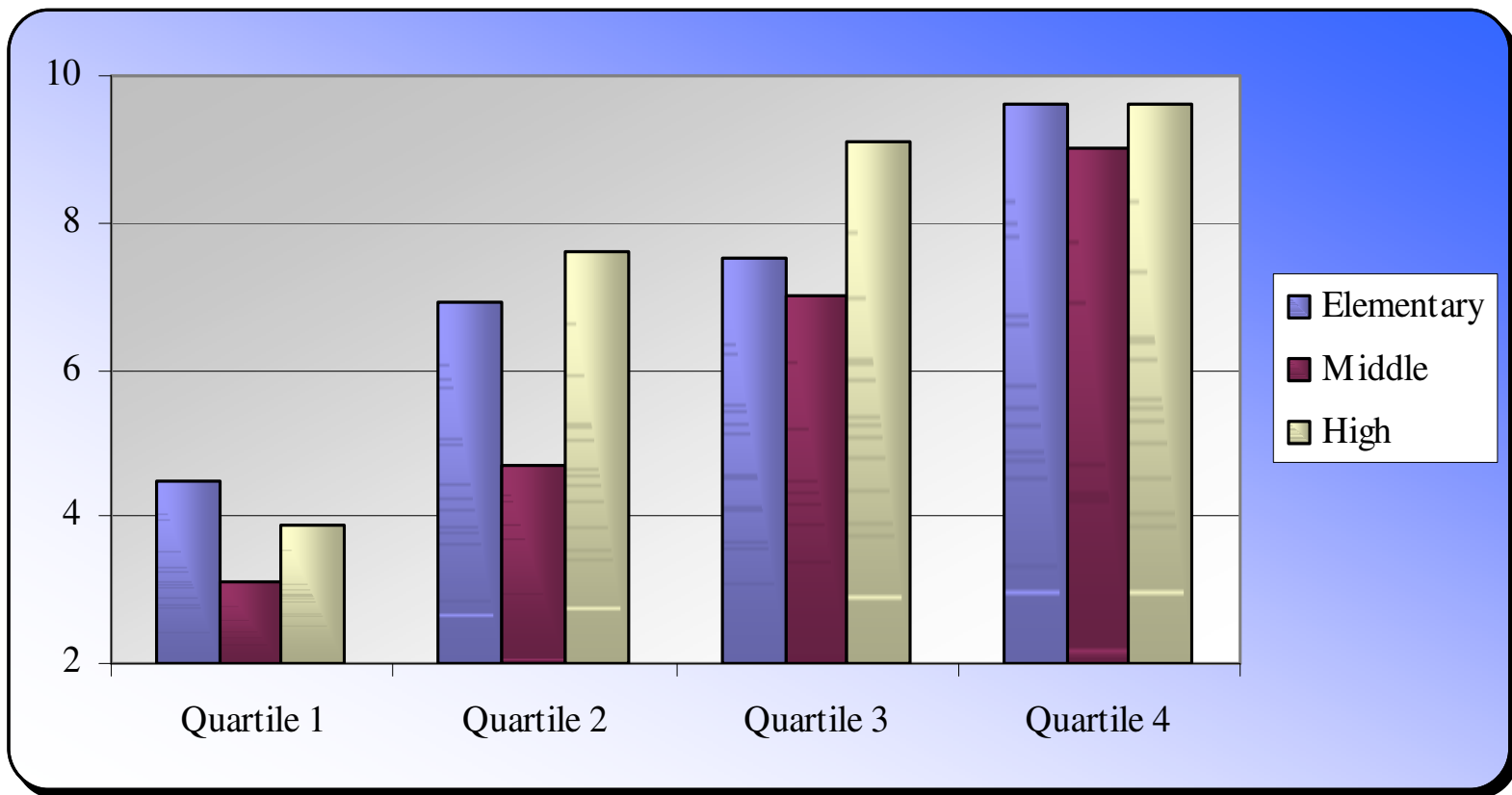
# High poverty schools have teachers with weakest credentials

- Highest percentage of teachers
  - with less than 3 years experience
  - who graduated from an uncompetitive undergraduate college
  - with a non-regular license
- Lowest average teacher tests scores
- Lowest percentage of teachers who are National Board Certified.

# Percent of teachers with less than 3 years of experience, by poverty quartile and school level



# Percent of teachers who are National Board Certified by poverty quartile and school level

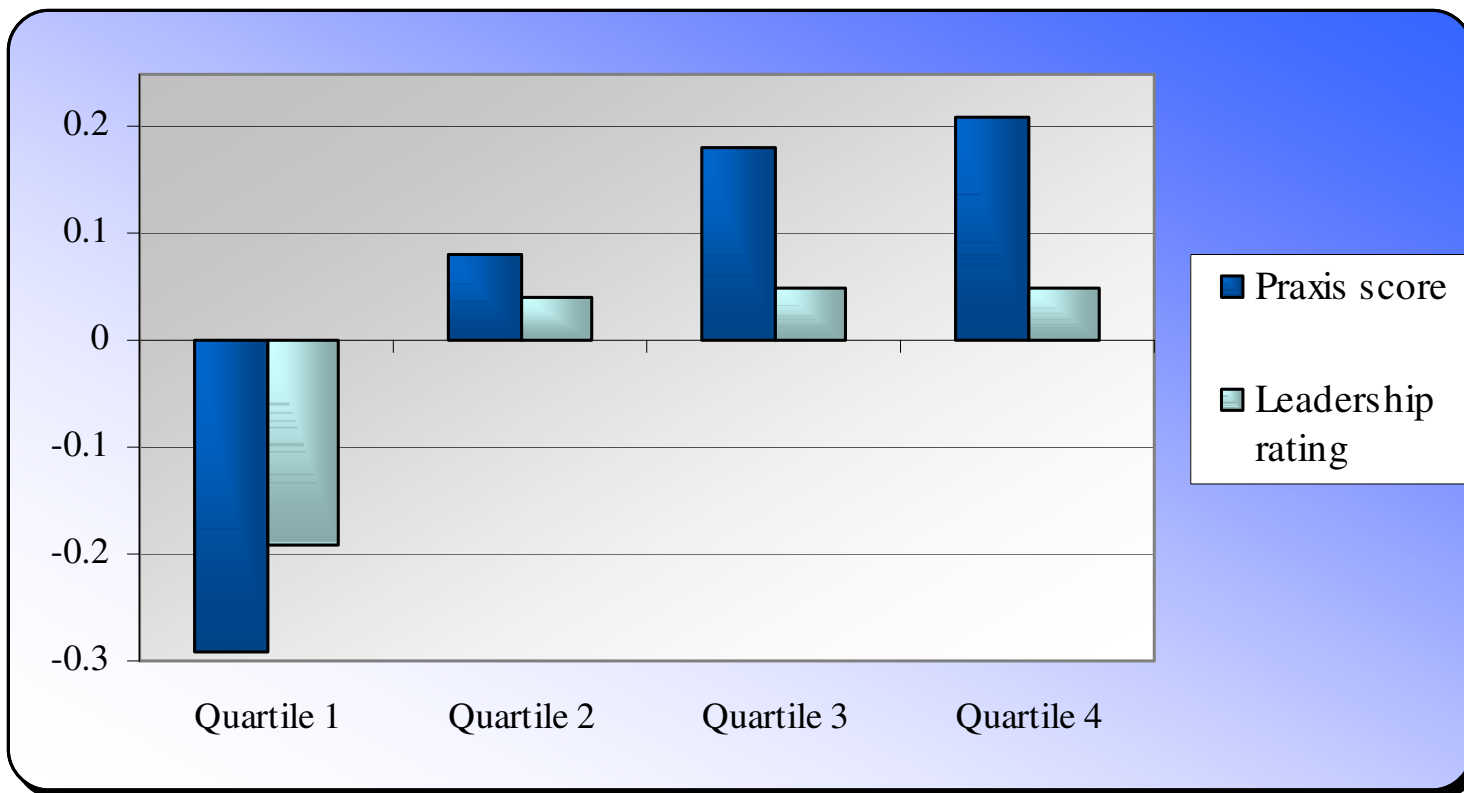


# Similar story for principals

- Lowest test scores -- praxis and school leadership exam scores
- Highest percent from uncompetitive colleges
- Lowest leadership rating

# Test scores and leadership ratings of school principals, by poverty quartile

(standard deviations)



# Remarkably consistent story

By every measure, high poverty schools have teachers and principals with weaker credentials than other schools

Also, the differentials in credentials between high poverty and more affluent schools have been growing over time.

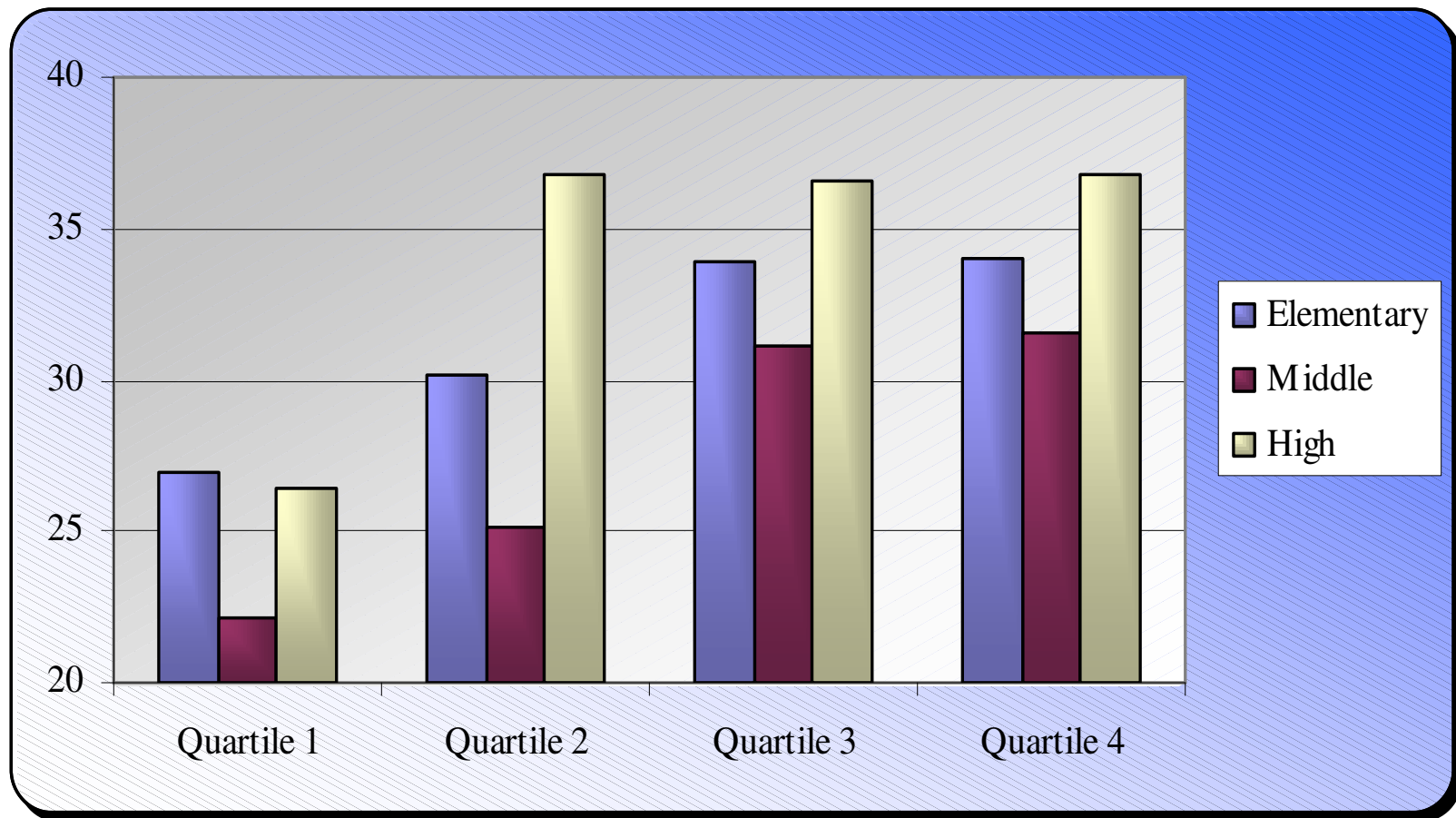
# Explanation: teachers

Difficult working conditions in high poverty schools, not compensated for by higher salaries

- Teachers **move away** from schools with high poverty rates to schools with lower poverty rates
- Result is **higher turnover** in high poverty schools
- Higher percentages of **new hires have no experience**
- Movement exacerbated by ABCs program

# Percent of teachers in 1999 who were in the same school in 2004

(For teachers who had 0-5 years of experience in 1999)



# Explanation: Principals

- Similar to teachers
  - movement toward schools with lower poverty rates
  - higher turnover in high poverty schools
  - more inexperienced principals
- Plus even more severe accountability pressures

# A clear problem

Weak credentials of teachers and principals  
have adverse effects on student achievement

(See evidence from our prior work cited in paper)

**Bottom line: A systemic problem that  
requires major new policy initiatives**

# Final points

- The patterns are socially unjust by even the simplest measure of equal educational opportunity
- The patterns complicate school-based accountability efforts
- One policy option
  - Targeted salary bonuses for teachers in high poverty schools – e.g. NC \$1800 bonus program