



## #166: Reporting on Poverty and School Achievement

### Speakers

- Linda Lutton, WBEZ Education Reporter
- Tim Broderick, Daily Herald News Presentation Editor

**Sponsor** [Dev Bootcamp](#)

### Event page

<http://chihacknight.org/events/2015/07/28/reporting-on-poverty-and-school-achievement.html>

### Some things to know

- There will be food! You are also welcome to take up to 2 drinks from the 'everyone' refrigerator.
- Braintree space: We are free to use the auditorium, small offices directly next to it, and the cafeteria.
- [Twitter](#) and [Flickr](#): share using the **#chihacknight** hashtag. Follow us [@chihacknight](#)
- Website: [ChiHackNight.org](http://ChiHackNight.org)
  - Google Group: <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/chihacknight>
- Email updates: <http://eepurl.com/z65hn>
- Join our [Slack](#) channel: <http://slackme.chihacknight.org>

### Agenda

- 6:00 pm** Eating and socializing
- 6:15 pm** Welcome, introductions & meet your neighbor
- 6:30 pm** Announcements
- 6:40 pm** Presentation
- 7:15 pm** Highlight breakout groups
- 7:30 pm** Break into groups and hack

### Announcements

Share your civic tech news, events, projects and job opportunities!

### Speak up!

Concerned citizens are invited to speak Thursday night at the Preliminary Budget Hearing for Cook County from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at 118 N. Clark in the Board Room. Each speaker has three minutes to discuss the budget-related issues of their choice.

- Please use the form below to register. (*Item number not needed*)  
<http://www.cookcountyil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Testify-Form.pdf>
- You can also tweet comments that night using **#CCBudget2016**

### **Illinois Sunshine Database Launch**

1871 Chicago

222 W Merchandise Mart Plaza Chicago, IL 60654

Tuesday, August 4 11:00am

The Illinois Campaign for Political Reform, along with DataMade, the Illinois State Board of Elections, Illinois Election Data, BallotReady, and other reform organizations, will demonstrate a new online database that provides easy access to the most current information on all campaign contributions and expenditures in Illinois. [RSVP here.](#)

We will also be demoing the new Illinois Sunshine website at next week's Chi Hack Night!

**New Cook County Open Data:** [Wholesale Tobacco Dealers Registered with the Cook County Department of Revenue](#)

[Grow Chicago](#) - Metropolitan Planning Council's new TOD (transit-oriented development) calculator to show the benefits of building densely near train stations.

**RideW/Me is having a Summer Sprint this weekend** <http://ridewit.me/sprint>

We're preparing for our demo at the [Chicago Southside Mini Maker Faire](#) and the [Chicago Education Innovation Pitch Fest](#). We'll be at BLUE1647 from 10AM to 8PM. Food and giveaways? Yes.

### **Presentation notes: Reporting on Poverty and School Achievement**

Please help us take notes on the presentation!

- Tim Broderick -- "News Presentation Editor" @dailyherald
- Linda Lutton -- reporter from @WBEZeducation
- Huge data dump on data on student,s teachers, administrators, district-level finances
- Every october 1st-ish, state releases data, and is embargoes until around October 31st. Have about a week to look at this and decide what to present.
- % of youth who meet or exceed state standards is a key area of focus
  - This is not the actual score, but is a proxy measure.
  - Gets a lot of attention by parents, and media
  - It's predictable from year to year which schools are at the top
- Project was to bring context to these numbers, in the context of the October deadline.
  - Obvious measure was % of low-income students
- Relationship between poverty and % meets/exceeds:
  - Have % of youth qualifying for free/reduced-price lunch ("FRL") in the schools
  - Strong correlation between FRL and scores

- Scatter plots are very clear about the relationship, but most folks find it hard to digest scatter plots
- Exercise: compare schools with similar percentages of low-income schools
  - [reportcards.dailyherald.com/lowincome/elem2014index.html](http://reportcards.dailyherald.com/lowincome/elem2014index.html)
  - This was done overall, for high schools
  - Have a way to query district schools, sort by M/E, can see time trends in % poverty served, % minority, % M/E
  - Data is open-sourced
  - The project is clear about data that seems mistaken and missing
- After building these visuals, Tom and Melissa Silverberg (reporter at the Daily Herald) sought to partner with Linda Lutton. She agreed (but has been )
  - What does a reporter bring to this field? Curiosity + Skepticism
  - In November, WBEZ had reported that # of low-income youth now outnumber middle-income kids in IL public schools
    - No one wrote about it except for WBEZ!
- Process
  - Visualize the data
  - Query the data with questions
  - Scatterplot -- Linda found it convincing... was interested in the narrative of schools beating the odds (e.g. schools that are in the top right corner: high poverty, but also high achievement).
  - Poverty/achievement index is a measure of “beating the odds”
    - Poverty-Achievement Index is determined by calculating the z-score of a school with respect to other schools in its income decile  
(e.g. a school with 15% low income students will have its PAI calculated by finding its z-score in the population of schools with 10-20% low income students)
    - Precedent in education reporting and policy to focus on schools that “beat the odds.” She hypothesized that if we have more of these schools, we should see relationship between poverty and school outcomes weaken. Lutton says that this scatterplot showed her that this relationship was not weakening, even with the increase of these “zero-tolerance schools”
  - Interpreting beat-the-odds numbers:
    - Those below the average at a given level of poverty are overwhelmingly African American, those above are Hispanic
- Credit to Melissa Silverberg--was able to report stories from these schools
- There is going to be a Spanish-language version of these materials.
- Q&A
  - Q: Did you look for correlation between per-pupil financing and school performance
    - A: low correlation between those. Also: specific to context, a certain amount of spending may be more or less consequential in different parts of the state.
  - Q: Is the relationship between poverty and achievement stable across years?
    - A: the relationship in the scatterplots seems very

- Q: How stable are these statistics relative to value-added measures--which
- Q: How is this used by the district?
  - A: Is a tool for reporters to inform inquiry--look at