## RATIONALE

- Medical services play a small role in overall health
- Health is highly influenced by nonmedical factors, such as social, economic, and environmental factors which are grouped together as social determinants of health
- More specifically, social determinants of health (SDOH) are the conditions that an individual is born into or lives in, which consists of housing, education, transportation, employment, food access, and more
- SDOH are becoming more recognized in the medical community and are being evaluated during a patient visit
- Through LINC Scholars, my project consisted of a windshield tour of the town Williamston, NC to determine the importance and impact of social determinants of health, specifically the impact of education on the community

## METHODS

The following steps were completed:
- Background research to become familiar with Williamston’s history and the town in general
- A creation of a list of locations to visit, which included all of the schools and the community college
- A visit to each school to take photographs, in addition to an interview with the Director of Communications, Judy Jennette, at the Martin Community College
- Additional extensive research about the Martin County education system such as test performance, demographics, distance from neighborhoods, and extracurricular activities

## OBSERVATIONS AND RESULTS

### Quick Facts
- **Population:** 5,398
- **Major sources of income:**
  - Retail trade
  - Health care and social assistance
  - Educational services
  - 84.1% of the population has health coverage

### EJ Hayes Elementary
- **Performed better than 18.3% of all elementary schools in NC in 2019**
- **Riverside Middle**
- **Performed better than 14% of schools in NC in 2019**
- **Riverside High**
- **Performed better than 20.4% of other schools in NC in 2019**
- **Demographics of each school is similar to town’s with about 60% minority enrollment**
- At least 99% of students at each school have free/reduced school lunch
- **Graduation rate was 70-74% at Riverside High School in 2020**

### Riverside High School
- **Located in a neighborhood and an apartment complex**
- The condition of the building seemed as though it needed some improvement as there was a broken window on the side of the building. Also noticeable was a window AC unit in each classroom which is usually less expensive compared to a centralized AC unit but provides less cooling.

### A Board
- A board was located on the side of Riverside High School and lists the various companies and businesses which demonstrate some of the local funding this school has received. Sports seemed to have a large influence on the town as the football and baseball field were in great condition and the schools largely advertised sports on their websites. Riverside High offers 10 sports each for male and females.

### Riverside Middle School
- **Located further from neighborhoods but are located near neighborhoods but the middle and high schools are located further away**
- The building of EJ Hayes Elementary was in poorer condition compared to the other schools and it had a limited playground for students

### Riverside Elementary School
- **Was in poor condition compared to the other schools**
- **Listed as the most walkable school. The school was located near a neighborhood and an apartment complex. The condition of the building seemed as though it needed some improvement as there was a broken window on the side of the building. Also noticeable was a window AC unit in each classroom which is usually less expensive compared to a centralized AC unit but provides less cooling.**

## CONCLUSIONS - STRENGTHS/CHALLENGES

### Education
- **Is very important in terms of wellbeing as it influences various aspects of life**
- **Without education, job opportunities are limited, which limits income, which limits living conditions and much more.**
- **Overall Strengths:**
  - Opportunity to obtain higher education
  - Community college partners with high schools to allow students to enroll in college courses without tuition fees
- **Overall Challenges:**
  - Necessity of a car to travel to school
  - Low performing schools
  - The schools’ test performances averaged better than 17.56% of other schools in North Carolina
- **The limited job market in the town**

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ECU/VIDANT

- **Provide teachers with resources to aid teaching experience and provide tutors for the students to help improve test performance and the graduation rate**
- **Sponsor the school to help supply resources such as technology to supplement learning and internships for students to provide experience of a work environment before graduation**
- **Partner with a food market or grocery store to provide healthy food options for the students at school as most have free/reduced school lunch**

## SOURCES

1. Education attainment linked to health throughout lifespan. Exploring social determinants of health: [link](https://thenationshealth.aphapublications.org/content/46/6/1.3)
2. School Digger: [link](https://www.schooldigger.com/go/NC/schools/0288001169/school.aspx)
3. Martin County Schools: [link](https://www.martin.k12.nc.us/)
4. Max Preps: [link](https://www.maxpreps.com/high-schools/riverside-knights-williamston-nc/home.htm)
5. Public School Review: [link](https://www.publicschoolreview.com/north-carolina/williamston/high)
6. Data USA: Williamston, NC: [link](https://datausa.io/profile/geo/williamston-nc)
7. Interview with Judy Jennette