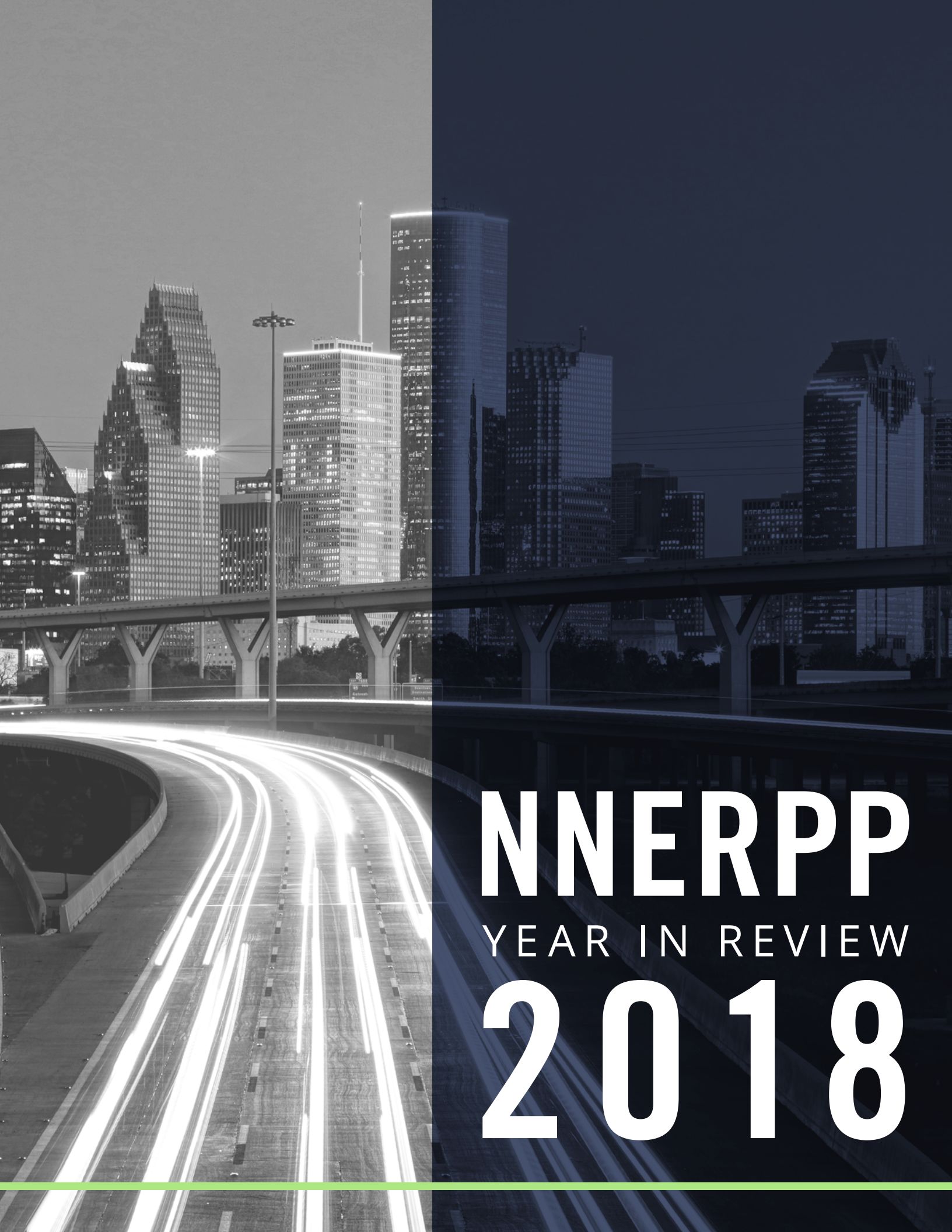

NNERPP

YEAR IN REVIEW

2018

ABOUT US

The National Network of Education Research-Practice Partnerships (NNERPP) is a professional learning organization for research-practice partnerships (RPPs) in education. Housed at the Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University, NNERPP was launched in 2016, guided by its mission to develop, support and connect RPPs in order to improve the relationship between education research, policy, and practice. NNERPP's activities are organized around four key objectives aimed at supporting its members and the larger RPP field: develop and share promising partnership strategies, facilitate cross-partnership collaborations, synthesize RPP-produced knowledge and disseminate findings, and advance policies and systems reforms.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings! I am so pleased to share the 2018 NNERPP Annual Report with you, our second entrant in this series. This report features a full summary of NNERPP's activities over the last 12 months, along with a collection of highlighted projects from our members launched or completed in 2018. We are very excited to welcome several new members to this year's edition (see p. 6 for a complete list of NNERPP members) and to share this sampling of the terrific efforts happening across the Network.

I'd like to share a special note of gratitude to our funders for their generous support of NNERPP, without whom this work would not be possible: William T. Grant Foundation, Spencer Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Annie E. Casey Foundation, and The Wallace Foundation. We are also very grateful to the Kinder Institute for Urban Research, our home base, which provides critical operational support for NNERPP.

This past year has been another one of growth for NNERPP in many different areas. A number of partnerships joined throughout the year, bringing new perspectives and more diverse partnership structures to the Network. In July, we hosted our largest Annual Forum yet in Portland, Oregon. In our discussions with members over the past year, we've noticed more nuanced conversations taking place about the work. And perhaps most importantly, we've seen a greater depth develop to the relationships across the Network. It has indeed been a fantastic year and we can't wait to see what 2019 has in store!

Paula Arce-Trigatti

Director, National Network of Education Research-Practice Partnerships

CREDITS

We'd like to acknowledge the excellent work of Nina Spitzley, NNERPP Program Administrator, on this report, and give a special thanks for her indispensable contributions to the team. We'd also like to acknowledge and give thanks to all of our members for helping us bring together the details of their projects.

Photos: Bioscience Research Collaborative (BRC) photos courtesy of Rice University.
Design: O'Neill Design Co.

The National Network of Education Research-Practice Partnerships
713.348.4132 | nnerpp.rice.edu | Twitter: @RPP_Network | LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/nnerpp

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NNERPP

SUMMARY OF PROJECTS 2018

WINTER

We kicked off the year with some strategic and big ideas thinking around the future of the RPP Movement with a small meeting co-organized and co-hosted by NNERPP, together with the Carnegie Foundation and the many efforts coming out of the University of Colorado, Boulder around research-practice partnership work. It was a great way to start the year and helped NNERPP better understand its role in supporting the RPP Movement.

The new year also brought with it some changes to the NNERPP Steering Committee, as we welcomed some new faces and said goodbye to a few others: This was our first year rotating members, with three members rotating off and three new members joining for 2-year terms. We are looking forward to regularly integrating new voices and perspectives and are very grateful to those who have served so far!

SPRING

Drawing from the collective knowledge of the NNERPP learning community, we produced our first NNERPP-branded products: (1) A guide for state education agencies (SEAs) to assess their potential to successfully engage in a research-practice partnership and (2) another guide for SEA leaders about launching research-practice partnerships. Both were created with input from NNERPP members Carrie Conaway (Massachusetts) and Nate Schwartz (Tennessee). We had additional help from dear friend of the Network, Caitlin Farrell (National Center for Research in Policy & Practice), on the SEA assessment guide.

In an effort to create more specialized learning communities within NNERPP, we launched our first two subnetworks in the Spring: (1) The RPP Measurement & Evaluation Subnetwork and (2) The District Research Leaders Subnetwork. These subnetworks allow members to support each other, share resources, and create expertise around specialized topics. Each subnetwork includes an external expert in addition to members from NNERPP.

SUMMER

From July 11 to 13, NNERPP hosted its 2018 Annual Forum in Portland, Oregon, in association with Education Northwest. With close to 120 participants representing 28 research-practice partnerships as well as a number of foundations, research institutions, and non-profit agencies, this was our biggest Forum yet! Our agenda featured many engaging and interactive learning opportunities related to this year's theme: "Partnering for Change: How do RPPs increase the use of research evidence in policy and practice?" We examined practice-side organizational charts and refined theories of action, collaborated on research topics of interest, learned from an all-star UChicago Consortium keynote panel, explored pressing questions of RPP effectiveness and sustainability, and so much more!

For the first time this year, we also co-hosted a special pre-Annual Forum gathering on postsecondary issues together with the Postsecondary Readiness and Success Cross-Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) working group. Over 30 attendees, including practitioners and policymakers from various cities across the nation, participated in this very productive meeting.

continued »

FALL

As a direct follow-up to the Annual Forum, we undertook our first ever Network-wide "Listening Tour" of NNERPP members in the Fall. This virtual journey to each member's home base helped us connect more deeply with each partnership in NNERPP, learn more about members' needs, and explore strategies together for how NNERPP might continue to build on the deep learning that happened during the Forum. Our Listening Tour report shared with our members and funders what we heard across the Network and action steps for NNERPP's future services and activities in response to the themes that emerged. We plan to make this very informative (and fun!) Tour a recurring activity.

October marked two years of hosting our monthly virtual brown bags, face-to-face online meetings for NNERPP members to share and discuss new research, partnership challenges, and RPP how-tos with each other (or with special guests, from time to time). To celebrate the occasion, we launched a new Virtual Brown Bag website, where webinar details, videos, and slides for all previous and future brown bags can now be found all in one place. As a password-protected, members-only space, we hope the new website will encourage members to explore brown bags they might have missed or favorites they'd like to revisit, and make it easier to do so!

YEAR-AROUND

In addition to our monthly brown bags, other NNERPP activities also happened year-round. This was our second full year of the bi-weekly NNERPP Newsletter, delivering RPP news and updates straight to our subscribers' inboxes every other Friday. Our weekly blog on Education Week "Urban Education Reform: Bridging Research and Practice," featuring the work of many NNERPP members and friends, also saw a number of new posts throughout the year.

Last but not least: Throughout the year, nine new members joined NNERPP — we are thrilled to see the Network grow and to welcome these new, diverse partnerships into the family!

OUR MEMBERS

LOS ANGELES, CA
SACRAMENTO, CA
SAN FRANCISCO, CA
STANFORD, CA
WASHINGTON, D.C.
DENVER, CO
NEW HAVEN, CT
ATLANTA, GA

IOWA CITY, IA
CHICAGO, IL
EVANSTON, IL
NAPERVILLE, IL
LOUISVILLE, KY
NEW ORLEANS, LA
BALTIMORE, MD
BOSTON, MA

RALEIGH, NC
PRINCETON, NJ
CLEVELAND, OH
CORVALLIS, OR
PORTLAND, OR
NEW YORK CITY, NY
PHILADELPHIA, PA
NASHVILLE, TN

AUSTIN, TX
HOUSTON, TX
SEATTLE, WA
MADISON, WI
MILWAUKEE, WI

NNERPP SUBNETWORKS

This year saw the launch of subnetworks, specialized learning communities within NNERPP organized by topic or role. The aims of the subnetworks are to connect members that are interested in collaboratively exploring a topic or role more deeply, to provide support for the sharing and development of resources, and to create hubs of expert knowledge for the rest of the Network. Two subnetworks have officially launched in 2018: the District Research Leaders Subnetwork and the RPP Effectiveness Subnetwork. Looking ahead, we are currently developing several new subnetworks (see descriptions below) and are hoping to launch them in the near future.

A. TOPIC SPECIFIC SUBNETWORKS

The NNERPP Topic Specific Subnetworks reflect our members' current research areas; the goals are to strengthen relationships with fellow colleagues doing research in a particular area, to build collective expertise on a given topic, and to explore potential opportunities for cross-partnership collaborations.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SUBNETWORK

For those conducting research on topics related to early childhood education.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER SUBNETWORK

For those conducting research on topics related to English Language Learners.

TEACHER-RELATED TOPICS SUBNETWORK

For those conducting research on teacher professional development, pipeline, and effectiveness.

COLLEGE / POSTSECONDARY SUBNETWORK

For those conducting research on college access, readiness, and success and other postsec. outcomes.

B. ROLE ALIKE SUBNETWORKS

The NNERPP Role Alike Subnetworks will bring people together working in similar roles across RPPs, so that they may support each other, share relevant resources, and co-develop new ones. Additionally, we hope the groups also contribute to our larger understanding of their roles in RPPs.

COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT SUBNETWORK

For those in communications and engagement roles that would like to network with others in similar roles.

STATE EDUCATION AGENCIES SUBNETWORK

For those working at a State Education Agency (SEA) or within an RPP that partners with an SEA.

RPP BROKERS SUBNETWORK

For knowledge brokers or intermediaries that would like to network with others in similar positions.

DISTRICT RESEARCH LEADERS SUBNETWORK

For those working in a research department at a district (already launched).

C. RPP RELATED SUBNETWORKS

The NNERPP RPP Related Subnetworks will consist of small working groups to tackle persistent challenges encountered in RPP work. Additionally, the subnetworks will allow members to workshop RPP-related problems, to access a support team of relevant peers, and to develop and test promising RPP practices for the broader field.

RPP WRITING GROUP SUBNETWORK

For those that would like to collaborate with others on producing white papers or research articles on RPPs.

EQUITY IN RPPS SUBNETWORK

For those that would like to develop and test RPP strategies that will best support equity with others.

EARLY PHASE RPP SUBNETWORK

For those that are in the early stages of their RPP and would like to workshop problems together.

RPP EFFECTIVENESS SUBNETWORK

For those that would like to help produce measures to assess RPP effectiveness (already launched).

AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH: REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY (REL) MIDWEST

FOUNDED
2012

JOINED NNERPP
2015

PARTNERS
As part of a network of 10 regional educational laboratories funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, REL Midwest serves seven Midwest states, addressing the priorities and interests of these states through four research alliances and a networked improvement community, as well as other collaborations.

MISSION
REL Midwest works in partnership with practitioners to conduct applied research and provide training, coaching, and technical support. It supports a more evidence-based education system.

ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS
ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/publications.aspx

Website
ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest

Twitter
@RELMidwest

PROJECTS

PREDICTING EARLY COLLEGE SUCCESS FOR INDIANA STUDENTS

Research Questions

- Among the 2014 cohort of Indiana high school graduates enrolling in Indiana public two- or four-year colleges, what percentage of students achieved early college success, and how do those percentages vary by student and school characteristics and type of financial aid?
- What is the relationship between receiving aid and early college success, controlling for other student- and school-level characteristics?

Why This Study

Many high school graduates enroll in college, but not all successfully attain degrees. In Indiana, state education leaders are committed to narrowing the gap between students' college aspirations and attainment, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. This study examines student characteristics associated with early college success, with a focus on the types of financial aid students received.

Main Findings

Students who attended four-year colleges had higher rates of early college success than students who attended two-year colleges, and high school academic achievement was associated with early college success. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds continue to experience lower rates of early college success. Early college success rates also varied by the types of financial aid students received, with Indiana 21st Century Scholarship recipients being more likely to achieve early college success than Pell Grant recipients and significantly more likely to persist to a second year of college.

Project in Practice

As a result of this study, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (ICHE) plans to conduct supplemental analyses to better understand which types of students face the most challenges in terms of enrolling in the 21st Century Scholars program and maintaining program requirements. ICHE also plans to use its own data in new ways to better identify and serve at-risk populations who might not participate in the 21st Century Scholars Program.

IMPROVING ACADEMIC OUTCOMES FOR BLACK STUDENTS

Research Questions

What interventions have been shown to be associated with improved academic achievement of Black students according to evidence tiers I (strong evidence), II (moderate evidence), and III (promising evidence) from the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)?

Why This Study

Achievement gaps between Black students and their White peers in Wisconsin have consistently been among the largest in the United States. REL Midwest conducted a systematic review of research on interventions that may improve academic outcomes for Black students to address this challenge.

Main Findings

The research review identified 24 studies that provided Tier III evidence—promising evidence—supportive of 22 interventions. No studies were identified that provided Tier I or Tier II evidence. Among others, promising interventions included: Adopting the Good Behavior Game with enhanced academic curriculum, adopting the Student Success Skills program, implementing mentoring programs for male Black youth, parent involvement at school, communicating high expectations to the students, and introducing students to self-affirmation techniques.

Project in Practice

Stakeholders including school district and state education agency staff have discussed how to use the literature review findings to increase the educational outcomes among Black students. The Iowa State Board of Education asked REL Midwest to present the findings of the literature review as they work to identify promising strategies in Iowa. Additionally, REL Midwest produced a video highlighting three practices from the research review. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and other RPP members have shared the video widely and some plan to use it in professional development programs for educators.

AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH: REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY (REL) SOUTHWEST

FOUNDED
1946

JOINED NNERPP
2016

PARTNERS

As part of a network of 10 regional educational laboratories funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, REL Southwest serves the education needs of 5 Southwest states through eight research alliances which bring together practitioners, policymakers, and researchers.

MISSION

Helping states and school districts systematically use research and data to answer important issues of policy and practice, with the goal of improving student outcomes.

ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS

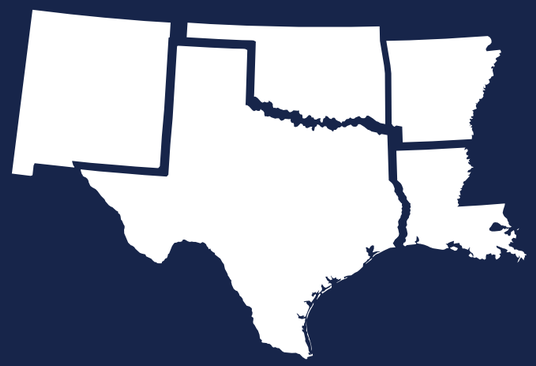
ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southwest/about_rel_southwest/our-work.aspx

Website

ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southwest

Twitter

@RELSouthwest



PROJECTS

INITIAL SPANISH PROFICIENCY AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AMONG SPANISH SPEAKING ENGLISH LEARNER STUDENTS IN NEW MEXICO

Research Questions

The study addressed three research questions to understand whether differences in initial kindergarten Spanish proficiency for Spanish speaking English Language Learners were linked to disparities in attaining English proficiency and academic achievement in reading and math by grades 4 and 5.

Why This Study

Previous research on English Language Learners students has shown a relation between a student's skill in the native language and the student's growth in the second language. This study examines the connection between initial Spanish proficiency and English language development to inform practitioners' efforts in identifying at-risk English Language Learners in need of intensive supports.

Main Findings

English proficiency outcomes differed when examined across initial Spanish proficiency groups: English Language Learner students with low and medium initial Spanish proficiency were reclassified as fluent English proficient at lower rates than students with high initial Spanish proficiency, even by year 4 or 5 after kindergarten. Students with high initial Spanish proficiency who were reclassified by year 4 or 5 also had higher rates of grade-level readiness in English language arts and math than students with low or medium initial Spanish proficiency.

Project in Practice

The results of this study have been used to further support and assess bilingual programs in New Mexico and the State Department of Education program during the current cycle of the REL Southwest contract.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN OKLAHOMA RURAL AND NONRURAL SCHOOLS

Research Questions

This study explored four research questions around Algebra II completion and failure rates overall and by student and district characteristics before and after changes in math course requirements for high school graduation in Texas.

Why This Study

The elimination of Algebra II as a math course requirement for high school graduation in Texas in 2013 was controversial. The chair of the Texas State Board of Education and the Texas Education Agency wanted to learn more about the bill's effects on students' coursetaking behavior.

Main Findings

The findings from this study suggest that students' choice of the third high school math course was not immediately influenced by the new bill and that many school districts continued to place students in Algebra II. The trend for Algebra II completion and failure rates before and after the new graduation requirements were similar.

Project in Practice

The results of this analysis indicate that changes to graduation requirements at the state level do not always translate into immediate changes in practice at the district and school levels (or immediate changes in student outcomes), which might be of interest to other states contemplating similar changes to their graduation requirements.

BALTIMORE EDUCATION RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

FOUNDED
2006

JOINED NNERPP
2017

PARTNERS
Baltimore City Head Start and Early Head Start
Baltimore City Health Department
Baltimore City Public Schools
Catholic Charities
Family League of Baltimore
Johns Hopkins University
Maryland Family Network
Morgan State University
St. Vincent De Paul
The Y of Central Maryland

MISSION
Conducting and disseminating long- and short-term strategic data analysis and research that informs decisions about policy and practice to improve the educational and life outcomes of children in Baltimore.

ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS
baltimore-berc.org/category/publications

Website
baltimore-berc.org

Twitter
@BaltimoreBERC

PROJECTS

POST-HIGH SCHOOL PATHWAYS OF BALTIMORE YOUTHS

Research Questions

Over a series of seven briefs, BERC examines the educational and workforce outcomes of Baltimore graduates six years after graduation. Each brief focuses on a different part of graduates' trajectories and one or all of these four outcomes: (1) enrolling in college, (2) completing a college degree, (3) median annual income, and (4) earning a livable wage.

Why This Study

Getting a more complete picture of the pathways Baltimore youth are taking after high school can be a starting point for implementing policies and supports to improve Baltimore graduates' career and college access.

Main Findings

Approximately 50 percent of Baltimore graduates enrolled in college, with about half of these also working at the same time. However, only about half of the remaining 50 percent were working for Maryland businesses, meaning that about a quarter of graduates were neither enrolled in college nor working in the state's formal labor force. Only about 16 percent of the overall cohort were earning a livable wage six years after high school. Even among those who completed a 4-year college degree, only 24 percent were earning a livable wage.

Project in Practice

Baltimore City Public Schools plans to use the reports as baseline information for partnerships with the business community, local civic leaders, community colleges, and postsecondary training programs to help Baltimore City youth launch into adulthood with a higher success rate. The district will also share findings with students and their families and at an annual high school principal retreat.

EARLY EDUCATION DATA COLLABORATIVE

Objectives

The Early Education Data Collaborative (EEDC), a data sharing collaborative among various early childhood stakeholders in Baltimore convened by the Baltimore Education Research Consortium, aims to support Baltimore City's collective impact initiative to improve child well-being from birth to adulthood.

Why This Collaborative

EEDC brings together the individual efforts of early childhood stakeholders across Baltimore, improving and increasing the efficacy and interconnectedness of programs and services to benefit Baltimore's children.

Main Studies

2018 studies have examined:

- Kindergarten Enrollment in Baltimore
- Baltimore Youth in Publicly Funded Programs
- Baltimore's Infants & Toddlers Program
- Parent Perspectives on Judy Centers

Project in Practice

EEDC findings have been shared with advocates lobbying for additional early education programs among policy makers in Maryland's State Legislature. One of the programs used the findings to re-prioritize the process to enroll families into programs. The transition of children from Baltimore Infants & Toddlers to City Schools is now being strengthened to ensure families and children continue to receive services.

CLEVELAND ALLIANCE FOR EDUCATION RESEARCH

FOUNDED
2016

JOINED NNERPP
2017

PARTNERS

American Institutes for Research
Center for Urban Education at Cleveland State University
Cleveland Metropolitan School District

MISSION

Bringing original data analysis to bear on problems of practice and policy in Cleveland schools.

ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS

csuohio.edu/cehs/cue/cleveland-alliance-for-education-research-caer

Website

csuohio.edu/cehs/cue/cleveland-alliance-for-education-research-caer

Twitter

@cle_ed_research

PROJECTS

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL CLIMATE AND EDUCATION OUTCOMES IN CLEVELAND [ONGOING, PRELIMINARY FINDINGS]

Research Questions

This research examines questions around the over-time relationship of individual students' perception of school climate and their education outcomes in order to identify the dimensions of school climate that are predictive of student success and to identify any gaps in experiences of school climate by student subgroups.

Why This Study

Research and theory suggest that positive school climate contributes to positive education and developmental outcomes for students. In response to such evidence, the Cleveland Metropolitan School District has made significant investments in school climate improvement and assessment in the past decade. This research will inform the district's ongoing efforts around school climate.

Main Findings

Initial findings suggest an association between improvement in a student's perception of safety, teacher expectations and support, and peer relationships from one season to the next (e.g., from fall to winter) and improvement in the student's math and reading achievement and attendance. Additionally, preliminary results suggest that the direction of the predictive relationship between school climate and education outcomes flows from school climate to student education outcomes rather than the reverse.

Project in Practice

Results will be shared with the district's academic leadership team, including the network support leaders, and leaders of academic departments, in addition to principals and teachers. This will enable district and school leaders to have focused conversations about the research and how it can assist in improving school climate and raising academic scores.

UNDERSTANDING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS' PATTERNS OF POSTSECONDARY READINESS AND SUCCESS [ONGOING]

Research Questions

Two related research projects will examine English Language Learners' (EL) patterns of postsecondary readiness and success, how these patterns vary among different EL subgroups, and how they compare with never-EL students. First, a correlational study to explore these patterns for five consecutive cohorts of students to gain a deeper understanding of associated student- and school-level characteristics will be conducted and second, a follow-up study will be developed based on the results from the first study and feedback from practitioners.

Why This Study

Several key factors (such as grade point average and college entrance examination scores) are consistently linked to enrollment and success in postsecondary institutions, but few studies have focused on these links as they pertain to EL students. Yet with Cleveland's population of EL students having doubled and becoming increasingly diverse over the last 12 years, district efforts to increase postsecondary readiness and success need a thoughtful focus on these students.

Project in Practice

The results of the initial study will be presented to superintendents and principals of high schools enrolling English Language Learners. The researchers will provide school-specific results and facilitate a conversation to generate questions, get feedback, and inform a subsequent research study. The goal is to help schools in choosing programs, practices, and strategies that are right for their students' needs.

COMPUTER SCIENCE FOR ALL IN NORTH CAROLINA

FOUNDED
2016

JOINED NNERPP
2018

PARTNERS
Friday Institute for Educational Innovation
Department of Computer Science at North Carolina State University
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
RTI Center for Evaluation and the Study of Educational Equity
Several North Carolina school districts

MISSION
Identifying pressing needs and/or opportunities in computer science teaching and learning and conducting theory-driven research to iteratively improve how programs and policies are working.

ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS
fi.ncsu.edu/teams/cs4all

Website
cs4all.fi.ncsu.edu

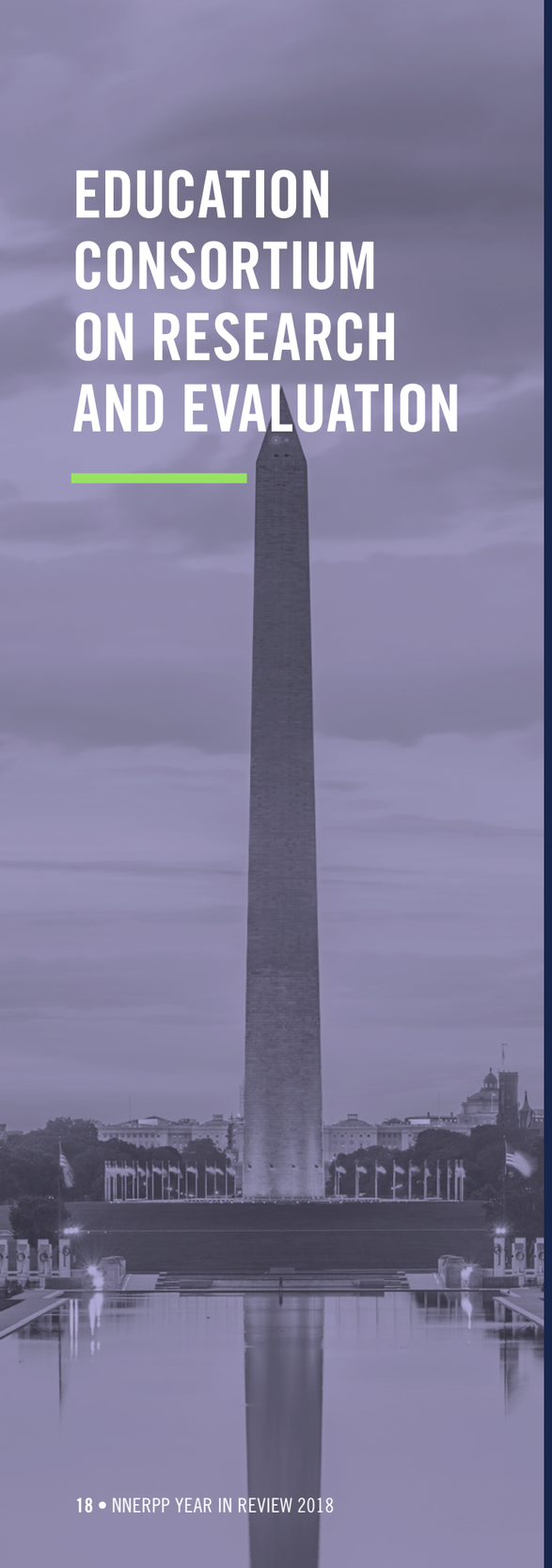
Twitter
@FridayInstitute

PROJECTS

CREATING A CULTURE OF COMPUTATIONAL THINKING: INSIGHTS FROM AN EARLY PHASE RESEARCH-PRACTICE PARTNERSHIP

The integration of computational thinking and computer science principles into core K-12 academic areas is seen as one of the most complex issues to address in fostering critical 21st century thinking skills essential for tomorrow's workforce. We use a research-practice partnership approach to support schools, districts, and state, regional, and local leaders in developing, implementing, and sustaining effective computer science programs and policies. A foundational goal of these partnerships is to bring together practitioners in all areas of computer science education (in-school, after-school, community programs, informal learning spaces, museums, and higher education) to establish computer science/computational thinking (CS/CT) ecosystems that expand opportunities in computer science and broaden participation for all students throughout the state. Researchers at the Friday Institute collaborate closely with the practitioners throughout the CS/CT ecosystems to identify pressing needs and/or opportunities in computer science teaching and learning and then conduct theory-driven research to iteratively improve how programs and policies are working in concert to address barriers and support more opportunities for all students.

One example of this approach can be seen through our current work with a middle school that is rapidly building a successful digital sciences program. Using existing data collected by the school through classroom walkthroughs and surveys, in addition to conversations with subject-specific professional learning teams, we were able to develop a more nuanced understanding of the successes and challenges teachers faced in implementing the digital sciences program. Based on our findings, we collaboratively created additional tools and strategies to support teachers. For example, we developed a Thesaurus of Computational Thinking Terms, based on teachers voicing the need for additional support in applying computational thinking terminology. This need was reinforced in our walkthrough data. To drive home the "you are already doing this" idea, the Thesaurus compared computational thinking terms to words teachers already frequently used in their teaching. To address a need for modeling of subject-area implementation, university researchers brought a "faded model of support" into the classroom, whereby the role of the researchers was to initially lead instruction and support the teachers but then gradually fade to the back, letting the teachers take over. The collaboration between the practitioners and researchers showcases how an RPP approach best leverages the collective strengths of a multi-faceted team to address the complex issue of CT/CS integration and support successful, innovative practice in schools.



EDUCATION CONSORTIUM ON RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

FOUNDED
2012

JOINED NNERPP
2016

PARTNERS

GW's Graduate School of Education & Human Development
American Institutes for Research
Policy Studies Associates

MISSION

EdCORE serves the District of Columbia school system as a go-to research and analysis partner. Together with educators and community members we strive to produce relevant and trusted information used by DC district and school leaders, educators and policymakers to make evidence-informed decisions about education policies and practices.

ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS

edcoredc.org

Website

edcoredc.org

PROJECTS

STUDENT LEARNING PLANS IN DC

EdCORE was commissioned to explore options for a learning plan pilot in DC schools on behalf of the Office of the District of Columbia Auditor. Specific activities of the project include presenting evidence on learning plan development and implementation, identifying critical elements of effective student learning plans, providing a comparative summary of available technology platforms, and designing options for pilot project implementation and evaluation.

STUDENT LEARNING PLANS: OPTIONS FOR A PILOT PROJECT IN DC

Research Questions

- What does evidence and experience suggest regarding effective development and implementation of personalized learning plans (PLPs) at the school, district and state levels?
- How might school leaders, teachers, counselors, parents/guardians and students use PLPs to ensure students are on track to graduate?
- How might DC implement PLPs in selected pilot schools, evaluate and improve the pilot implementation, and expand implementation in future years?

Why This Study

This project is a response to the DC State Board of Education's recommendation for creating personalized learning plans to ensure public school students in DC are on track to graduate.

Main Findings

Student learning plans are used to meet multiple goals. Our analysis found that states, districts, and schools tended to implement student learning plans for objectives that fell into three categories of purpose, to:

- Track student progress toward graduation,
- Support college and career exploration and development, or
- Inform personalized learning approaches in curriculum and instruction.

Individual learning plans are also used as a tool for parent communication, a vehicle to increase student agency, a system to share information across schools, and a platform to document strategies to help teachers and schools support particular student populations, such as students with disabilities and English Language Learners. Learning plans are ultimately at the service of students, families and educators.

EDUCATION NORTHWEST

FOUNDED
1966

JOINED NNERPP
2016

PARTNERS
REL Northwest, operated by Education Northwest, primarily works in five Northwestern states, partnering with schools, districts, and communities on comprehensive, research-based solutions to the challenges they face. REL Northwest researchers and technical assistance providers work alongside practitioners and policymakers to conduct rigorous research and trainings and to share actionable findings that focus on the region's high-priority needs.

MISSION
Improving learning by building capacity in schools, families, and communities through applied research and development.

ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS
ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/publications/

Website
educationnorthwest.org

Twitter
@educationnw
@relnw

PROJECTS

THE OREGON BILINGUAL TEACHER PIPELINE COLLABORATIVE

Why This Collaborative

The national shortage of bilingual teachers is creating a demographic mismatch between educators and the rapidly growing population of English Language Learner students. Oregon school districts are struggling to recruit highly skilled bilingual teachers to meet the demand. To address this need, Portland Public Schools and Portland State University have created a partnership to recruit, develop, and retain bilingual teachers with facilitation from REL Northwest.

Objectives

- Build school and district capacity to use data and evidence to better understand their staffing needs and current practices around recruitment, development, and retention of bilingual teachers
- Collect and analyze data on teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the bilingual pathway program
- Use formative data to support professional learning for bilingual teachers
- Review and summarize evidence-based practices for recruiting and retaining bilingual teachers of color
- Optimize an alternative licensure program offered by the district and university

Key Takeaways

Through its work so far, the collaborative has found that it is critical to clearly identify roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders, such as who serves as the primary contact person for new teachers in the pipeline and who is responsible for collecting program data. Another major lesson learned is that it's essential for teacher candidates to have a consistent vision of instruction and assessment from both their district and their college or university. REL Northwest has also identified which supports within the district's Dual Language Teacher Fellows program are working well and which areas need further improvement.

Project in Practice

Based on REL Northwest research findings, Portland Public Schools added a third week to their two-week dual-language summer institute for teacher fellows, had teacher mentors and teachers on special assignment work together more closely to streamline the support and messages the fellows receive, and added a new university partner to the Fellow program, enabling greater flexibility for fellows by now also offering a mostly-online program for teacher certification.

IDAHO'S EDUCATOR LANDSCAPE

Research Questions

The report describes statewide data from the 2011/12 through 2016/17 school years on changes in student enrollment and demographics, teacher preparation, the composition of the teacher workforce, and teacher turnover.

Why This Study

Recruiting teachers is a challenge in Idaho, especially in its rural districts. Understanding how and where Idaho's teacher workforce has changed relative to the size and characteristics of its student population can inform state and local efforts to support teacher recruitment, development, and retention.

Main Findings

Overall student enrollment in Idaho increased between 2011/12 and 2016/17. Idaho has met this growing student population by expanding its teacher workforce, although novice and early-career teachers, as well as teachers with alternative authorization certificates, are increasingly leading classrooms. Turnover is a problem: In each year of the study, about 1 in 5 teachers did not return to their school the following year. Many high-poverty schools are struggling to keep up with increasing enrollments of English learner students, in terms of teacher employment. Enrollment in Idaho's teacher preparation programs is declining over time; however, the programs are still producing a similar number of completers.

Project in Practice

Several stakeholder groups in Idaho, including the state education department, the state board of education, colleges and universities, and rural and urban school districts, are connecting to together address teacher recruitment and retention challenges through the Idaho Educator Pipeline Alliance. They are using the data from this report to determine potential follow-up research and analysis projects with REL Northwest and to make their case to the Legislature.

As one rural district's superintendent put it in his blog post for NNERPP's EdWeek blog: "Evidence use is one of the keys for statewide collaboration. Having data available to work from helps us pinpoint where the problems are and gives us a common language as we take steps toward a solution."

EDUCATION RESEARCH ALLIANCE FOR NEW ORLEANS

FOUNDED
2014

JOINED NNERPP
2016

PARTNERS

Louisiana Association of Educators
Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools
Louisiana Federation of Teachers
Louisiana Recovery School District
New Schools for New Orleans
Orleans Parish School Board
Orleans Public Education Network
Urban League of Greater New Orleans

MISSION

To produce rigorous, objective, and useful research to understand the outcomes and effects of the post-Katrina school reforms and their long-term effects on all students.

ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS

educationresearchalliancenola.org/publications/archives

Website
educationresearchalliancenola.org

Twitter
@ERA_NOLA

PROJECTS

WHAT EFFECT DID THE NEW ORLEANS SCHOOL REFORMS HAVE ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION, AND COLLEGE OUTCOMES?

Research Questions

What effect did the New Orleans reforms have on student achievement, on the high school graduation rate, and on students' college outcomes? How did the New Orleans reforms affect achievement gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged students?

Why This Study

The post-Katrina school reforms represent arguably the most radical school reforms ever conducted in the United States. This study builds on earlier ERA New Orleans analysis examining the effects of these reforms.

Main Findings

The reforms resulted in growth across all outcomes examined in the study: Student achievement increased by 11-16 percentiles (depending on the subject and analysis method), the high school graduation rate increased by 3-9 percentage points, the college entry rate increased by 8-15 percentage points, the college persistence rate by 4-7 percentage points, and college graduation rate increased by 3-5 percentage points. The reforms also improved all outcomes for disadvantaged students and reduced educational inequities for high school and college measures.

Project in Practice

The study helps New Orleans evaluate whether the goals of the extensive post-Katrina reforms were accomplished and can help inform decisions on whether the strategies should be continued now that control of the charter schools shifted from the state back to the local school district. The findings are also relevant to the larger debate about charter schools, where the government has a more active role in oversight, versus school vouchers, which rely almost entirely on market forces, though it's important to keep in mind the specific circumstances in New Orleans.

WHAT GETS MEASURED GETS DONE: IMPROVING PERFORMANCE MEASURES IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF ACCOUNTABILITY UNDER ESSA

Research Questions

How would school ratings change if states measured school performance differently? In particular, how much would school performance ratings change if we added measures, like college entry, that are strong predictors of students' long-term life success? Also, how much would school performance ratings change if we focused not on outcome levels but on schools' contributions to those outcomes, sometimes called "value-added"?

Why This Study

If states seek to hold schools accountable for what they can control, and for those outcomes that are most predictive of students' long-term success, then most states' ESSA plans may place too little emphasis on value-added measures and outcomes like college entry. If we can improve school performance measures, then this analysis shows we can improve actual student outcomes.

Main Findings

If policymakers measured high school performance not only with test scores and graduation levels but also with college entry levels, then our analysis suggests that 28.6% of high schools in Louisiana would receive different performance ratings (e.g., moving from a letter grade of F to D). If school performance measures were based on a 50-50 mix of achievement levels and achievement value-added, instead of levels alone, then 24.2% of elementary schools and 32.9% of high schools in Louisiana would change performance categories. Switching from test score and high school graduation rate levels-only to equal weight on levels and value-added when choosing which schools to close would increase annual student achievement levels for the bottom fifth of all schools statewide by about 0.4 percentiles and increase the statewide high school graduation rate by 0.4 percentage points. When we include college entry alongside test scores and high school graduation, switching from levels-only to a mix of levels and value-added would increase the statewide college entry rate by 0.4 percentage points.

Project in Practice

This study informs decisions around creating new school performance measures. The analysis sheds light on the remaining weaknesses in state school accountability and highlights new possibilities for the next generation of performance measures.

EQUITY IMPLEMENTED

FOUNDED
2015

JOINED NNERPP
2018

PARTNERS
University of Iowa's Public Policy Center
Iowa City Community School District
Waterloo Community School District

MISSION
Creating more equitable experiences and outcomes for students using a data-informed, evidence-based, inclusive process of decision-making.

ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS
uiowa.edu/equityimplemented/publications

Website
uiowa.edu/equityimplemented

PROJECTS

LGBTQ STUDENT EXPERIENCES MULTI-STAKEHOLDER TASK FORCE

Why This Task Force

Motivated by the finding of systematic and patterned disparities between LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ students in the 2017 Assessing Student Experiences of School Report, a Task Force, representative of the District's LGBTQ community, was assembled to assess and prioritize potential strategies to promote greater equity in student experiences in the Iowa City Community School District.

Task Force Activities

Members of the Task Force reviewed four general strategies: supporting students and student groups; addressing school climate and community; improving educator knowledge and skills; and ensuring inclusive curriculum. They considered recommendations, deliberated options, and provided an assessment for the district Board of Education. The Task Force included administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents, and community members and began in September 2017, meeting regularly through November 2017. A 2018 report captures the recommendations the task force set forth and how the task force was assembled and worked together.

Specific Recommendations

- Support students and student groups
- Enhance the inclusiveness of the curriculum
- Improve educator knowledge and skills
- Create supportive and inclusive school environments
- Strengthen district policies and practices

Project in Practice

Members of a LGBTQ Steering Committee meet regularly to discuss progress on the implementation of each recommendation. To increase the inclusiveness of the school environment, gender inclusive restrooms are now available at each school building. To increase educator awareness, knowledge, and skills related to LGBTQ students, two professional development trainings have been provided to select teachers, with the hope of making this a recurring training session. The Steering Committee has also expanded to include representatives from each of the GSAs (student groups) to enhance the support provided and to increase the coordination of efforts between the groups and the district. Efforts are also underway to adopt a Gender Support Plan to support transitioning and transgender students, as well as several other changes to district policy to better support these students.

STUDENT EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOL CLIMATE IN THE IOWA CITY COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Research Questions

This report details the key findings from the third annual Student Experiences of School Climate survey administered to 5th-12th grade students in the Iowa City Community School District about various aspects of school climate, including student relationships with teachers, mentorship and adult support, inclusive classroom discussions, social belonging, safety, bullying, and more.

Why This Report

Research has shown a connection between positive school climate and positive student outcomes. Iowa City Community School District's annual school climate survey provides valuable insights about the characteristics of school climate from the student perspective, showing what is going well and where improvement and supports might be needed.

Main Findings

How students experienced school climate varied: Students of color, gender and sexual minorities, and low socioeconomic status reported fewer positive and more negative experiences in school. Aspects of school climate that got worse from the previous year to 2018 included student-teacher relationships, classroom membership, sharing diverse viewpoints, safety, responsiveness, disciplinary transparency, and hearing hurtful comments from teachers and students. Students' answers also indicated aspects of school climate that had improved from the previous year, including the presence of mentors and teacher mentors, inclusive discussions, disciplinary equity, and diversity and inclusive values.

Project in Practice

The findings from this report have created more urgency for the district in identifying key aspects of student experiences that require intentional efforts to improve and/or reduce disparities. Follow-up analyses to the report provided the district with more detailed analyses of which student experiences are most predictive of student achievement, and the district is planning to incorporate a focus on these areas as they update their Comprehensive Equity Plan.

HOUSTON EDUCATION RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

FOUNDED
2011

JOINED NNERPP
2016

PARTNERS

Rice University
Houston Independent School District
Aldine Independent School District
Alief Independent School District
Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District
Katy Independent School District
Pasadena Independent School District
Sheldon Independent School District
Spring Branch Independent School District

MISSION

Educational equity in Houston and beyond.

ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS

kinder.rice.edu/houston-education-research-consortium

Website

kinder.rice.edu/houston-education-research-consortium

Twitter

@RiceKinderHERC

PROJECTS

HOUSTON'S DECENTRALIZATION REFORM

Research Questions

This four-part research study examines various aspects of the implementation and impact of decentralization in the Houston Independent School District (HISD):

- Part I describes how decentralization was enacted in HISD
- Part II describes input from HISD principals and their sense of self-efficacy and capacity under the current decentralized model
- Part III examines the impact of decentralization on student outcomes [not yet released]
- Part IV examines the impact of decentralization on funding equity [not yet released]

Why This Study

In the 1990s, the HISD School Board adopted a decentralization plan to improve student achievement and increase equity in funding. This brief provides the necessary context for a thoughtful discussion about HISD's current decentralized model and the components of decentralization that were and were not fulfilled.

Main Findings

Part 1 of the study showed that decentralization was well implemented, but there are components that should be revisited to improve the intended outcomes of decentralization and the weighted student funding model. Part II found that HISD principals on average expressed positive statements about their own capacity, their training, and their sense of autonomy in the context of the duties they are asked to manage in the existing decentralized structure, though there are some opportunities to improve or increase principal support. Parts III and IV are pending release.

Project in Practice

In response to research findings in Part 1, the district created a Resource Allocation Advisory Committee tasked with reviewing the current weights and resource allocation structure. Part 2 of the study suggested that principals might benefit from increased budget analysis support. The district is currently looking at updating the finance training for principals, finance clerks, business managers and department heads.

TRANSITIONING TO COLLEGE AND WORK

Research Questions

- For 12th grade students in the Houston Independent School District (HISD), how many enroll in college or earn a degree within six years of high school? Are there differences by demographic, socioeconomic, behavioral, or academic characteristics?
- What is the average annual income for students who attended HISD? Are there differences by level of education and postsecondary field of study?

Why This Study

In light of troubling rates of college completion in Texas, this report presents descriptive statistics of college outcomes of three cohorts of 12th grade students in the Houston Independent School District to better understand where students in Houston are six years after graduation.

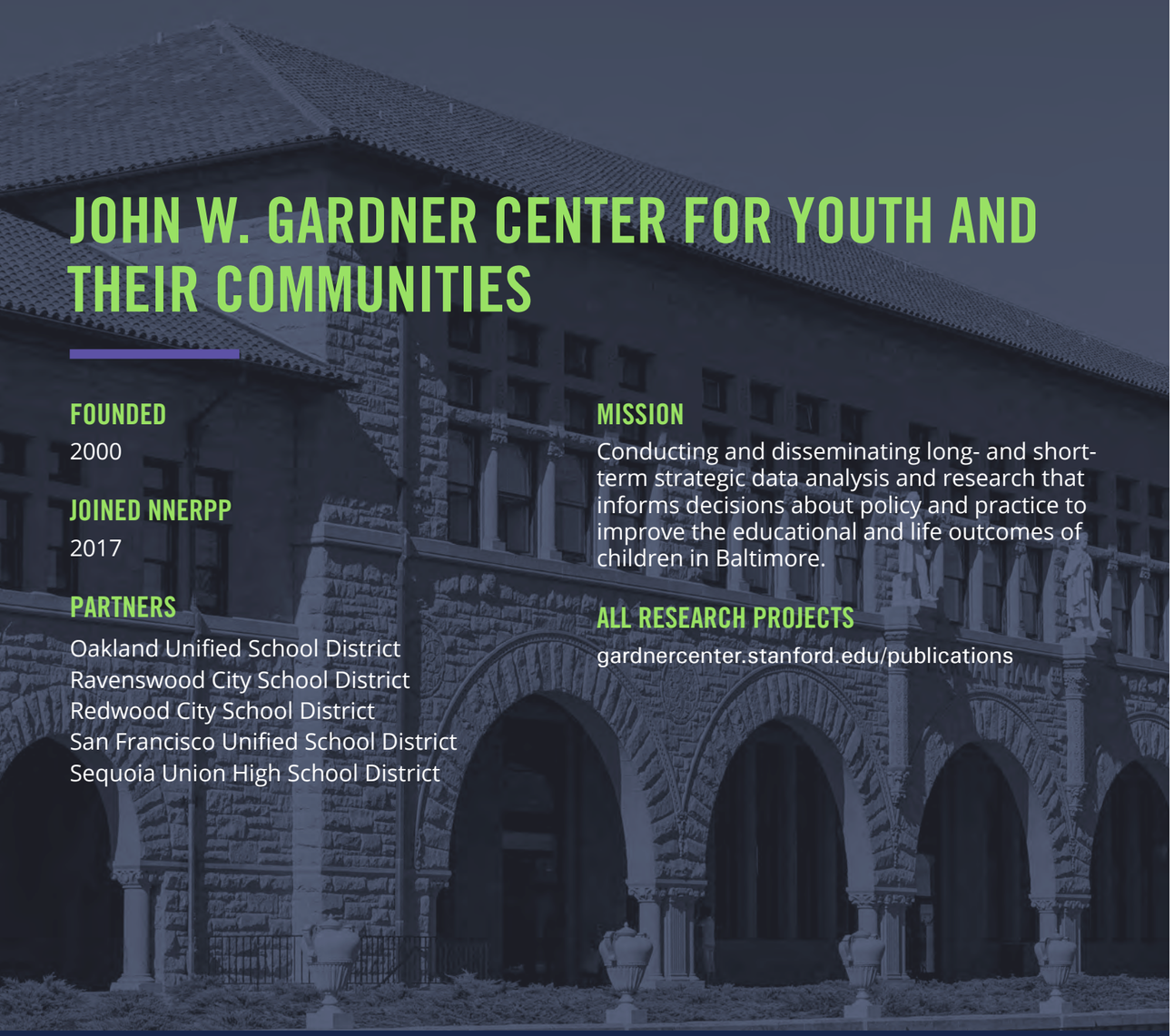
Main Findings

Almost half of HISD 12th graders from the fall 2006-2008 cohorts attended college the fall following high school graduation. Three-fourths of HISD high school graduates attended college within six years of high school, but only one-third earned some sort of credential. There were significant racial and ethnic disparities in postsecondary enrollment and completion. Hispanics, in particular, exhibited low rates of attainment. When Hispanic students do enroll in college, compared to white, black, and Asian students, they disproportionately attend community colleges or technical/vocational schools and earn sub-baccalaureate credentials.

Project in Practice

This project was based on district data prior to all their college advising efforts, so it's main utility is in providing a baseline for how HISD grads did before the district began its college advising efforts. HERC will redo these analyses for HISD grads who experienced college advising and compare them to these older cohorts (but not enough time has passed to do this yet), therefore the project's impact is forthcoming.

JOHN W. GARDNER CENTER FOR YOUTH AND THEIR COMMUNITIES



FOUNDED
2000

JOINED NNERPP
2017

PARTNERS
Oakland Unified School District
Ravenswood City School District
Redwood City School District
San Francisco Unified School District
Sequoia Union High School District

MISSION
Conducting and disseminating long- and short-term strategic data analysis and research that informs decisions about policy and practice to improve the educational and life outcomes of children in Baltimore.

ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS
gardnercenter.stanford.edu/publications

Website
gardnercenter.stanford.edu

Twitter
@gardnercenter

PROJECTS

FULL SERVICE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS IN THE OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT [ONGOING]

Research Questions

- How do district-level practices and policies support and align with site-level implementation?
- What are the experiences of new community school sites in implementing key organizational structures of the community school model (e.g., collaborative leadership, partnerships)?
- How are student- and school-level outcomes associated with the implementation of key FSCS design elements (e.g., programs, services, and supports)?

Why This Study

This longitudinal, multi-methods research project examines early outcomes and ongoing implementation of Oakland Unified School District's (OUSD) Full Service Community Schools (FSCS) Initiative. Findings inform district leaders' efforts to scale-up and develop implementation strategies to achieve OUSD's long-term ambition to become the nation's first full service community schools district.

Main Findings

OUSD community schools are demonstrating desirable trends in student outcomes including attendance, chronic absence, suspensions, and high school readiness. District staff put multiple strategies into practice to facilitate quality community school implementation and adaptation to local school context. These strategies included engaging with community school managers, principals, and partners to set standards of practice, offer tools and resources, foster professional learning communities, and provide coaching or supervisory support. School and partner staff are laying the groundwork for a collaborative culture by cultivating trusting relationships, sharing leadership, and implementing new structures and practices. By developing a shared vision, aligning partner resources to mutual goals, and continually assessing progress, school leaders are facilitating the organizational transformation needed to sustain the community schools initiative.

Project in Practice

Our joint research has helped inform OUSD's strategy, planning, and communications. Examples include decisions on a new school application and "onboarding" process, professional development for community school managers, engagement with community school principals, and other training and development. Research briefs and other publications have been useful tools to share with site-level staff as well as across the district more broadly.

UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCES OF ENGLISH LEARNERS [ONGOING]

Research Questions

- What are the educational experiences of English Learner (EL) students over time (in terms of enrollment and exit, and key education outcomes) across nine districts? How do experiences vary for EL proficiency subgroups (e.g. RFEP, LTEL) and relevant demographic subgroups within the larger EL group (e.g., ethnicity, newcomer status, FRPL participation or SPED status)?
- How do experiences vary by education contexts (e.g., grade, program, prior access to pre-school) and EL home backgrounds (e.g., parent education level, highly mobile families)?
- What are the implications for policies and practices to support ELs?

Why This Study

To better understand the experiences of English Learner students, this project examines key indicators that predict postsecondary success for ELs across nine school districts, from Kindergarten through high school, with particular focus around transition points when students are commonly more vulnerable. This research project is part of the Stanford Sequoia K-12 Research Collaborative which is a Research-Practice Partnership between the Stanford Graduate School of Education and nine local school districts.

Main Findings

At this stage, the project is focused on collecting data, building a data archive, and preparing for preliminary analysis.

Project in Practice

At this stage, partners see the potential to develop more of a system across the nine districts. One leader stated that the work could redirect and strengthen the districts, "so that we're not just coordinating and working together better, but that we're collectively more capable."

LOS ANGELES EDUCATION RESEARCH INSTITUTE

FOUNDED
2011

JOINED NNERPP
2016

PARTNERS
Los Angeles Unified School District

MISSION
Improving educational outcomes for Los Angeles students by producing a coherent, useful, and cumulative program of research designed to inform education policymaking and practice.

ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS
laeri.org/projects-and-publications

Website
laeri.org

Twitter
@LAEdResearch

PROJECTS

L.A. UNIFIED STUDENTS' PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE: FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE APPLICATION PATTERNS

Research Questions

This LAERI research brief is the first in a series exploring L.A. Unified students' pathways to college. This brief describes whether and where L.A. Unified students applied to college, and how these patterns differed among young men and women and among students from different ethnic/racial backgrounds and academic preparation levels.

Why This Study

This research represents a collaborative effort between LAERI and L.A. Unified to understand students' experiences, behaviors, and supports during the college application process.

Main Findings

Most twelfth graders in the sample (81%) applied to or registered for college by January of their senior year; a majority of twelfth graders (64%) applied to at least one four-year college. Students who applied to four-year colleges typically applied to four or eight colleges. Some students may be applying to fewer four-year colleges than may be optimal for their admissions chances, especially considering the availability of application fee waivers for low-income students. Students with lower grade point averages (GPAs) were less likely to apply to four-year colleges, as were students with disabilities and those with limited English proficiency (LEP). Students whose parents did not graduate from college were less likely to apply to a four-year college than students whose parents had completed a bachelor's degree or higher. Racial/ethnic differences in students' four-year college application rates were relatively small when comparing students with similar levels of academic achievement.

Project in Practice

Jesus Angulo, Director of Counseling Services, LA Unified:

"The new brief from LAERI provides the first districtwide snapshot of whether and where our students applied to college. Knowing what percentage of students applied to a four-year college, and which students were less likely to apply, helps us identify areas where we may need to target additional support."

COLLEGE READINESS PREDICTORS IN THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL YEARS AND THE STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES THAT HELP STUDENTS MEET THEM [ONGOING]

Research Questions

This ongoing research project seeks to identify 1) academic and behavioral benchmarks in elementary and middle school that are especially predictive of college readiness by the end of high school, and 2) strategies and practices in use at L.A. Unified schools that help elementary and middle school students meet those benchmarks.

Why This Study

Our prior research focused on L.A. Unified students' college eligibility, enrollment, and completion. These research studies highlighted the importance of improving students' academic skills to increase students' college access and educational attainment. This study builds on our prior work by helping the district identify potential early points of intervention to strengthen students' academic skills and potentially promising school practices that the district might scale and evaluate.

Main Findings

This project is ongoing.

Project in Practice

Thus far, this project has provided opportunities for LAERI to support the district's development of middle school early warning dashboards. It has also informed the district about elementary and middle schools that are especially successful at improving students' academic skills.

MADISON EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

FOUNDED
2016

JOINED NNERPP
2017

PARTNERS
Madison Metropolitan School District
University of Wisconsin-Madison's Wisconsin Center for Education Research

MISSION
Engaging in and supporting high-quality, problem-based research, contributing to policy discussions based on MEP-generated research, and regularly disseminating findings to the research community, school district, and the public in order to improve the experiences and individual outcomes for all Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) students.

ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS
mep.wceruw.org/publications

Website
mep.wceruw.org

Twitter
@MEP_WCER

PROJECTS

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN MADISON'S 4K PROGRAM: IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN'S READINESS

Research Questions

- What family engagement strategies do four-year-old kindergarten (4K) program sites and teachers use to communicate with, involve, and support parents?
- Are family engagement strategies related to children's attendance in 4K and school readiness skills?
- How do parents perceive and experience 4K programs' family engagement strategies?

Why This Study

Family engagement is an important yet understudied component of preschool program quality. The Family Engagement in Madison's 4K Program Study aims to shed light on family engagement efforts and their implications for children's school readiness in MMSD.

Main Findings

According to directors and principals, 4K programs implemented a high level of family engagement practices that are aligned with the MMSD Family and Community Engagement Standards (FACE). However, only about half of programs offered interpreters during group parent meetings, provided parenting resources, or referred parents to family support services. Teachers at early childhood education sites reported offering parental involvement opportunities more frequently than teachers at school sites. Some parents reported being unaware of services through their school, and Spanish-speaking parents' access also depended on the availability of Spanish-speaking staff. Teachers' practices for communicating with and involving parents were associated with higher early literacy skills at the end of 4K, but site-level practices were not, with the exception of programs' efforts to connect parents to family support services.

Project in Practice

The findings point to three areas of improvement: strengthening two-way communication and collaboration between parents and teachers; increasing parental involvement activities and participation; and improving families' access to social services and family support services. In particular, the MMSD FACE department might review the way Spanish-speaking staff are mobilized for engagement activities and strategize the ways families are connected to family support services on-site and through community organizations. These findings were shared at the First Annual MEP Research Symposium and 4K Summer Institute with teachers, directors, principals, and other community members.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN CHILDREN MISS SCHOOL?

Research Questions

- How prevalent are excused and unexcused absences in early elementary school?
- How are student and family background characteristics related to the number and type of absences students experience?
- How are excused and unexcused absences in early elementary school related to academic and socioemotional outcomes?
- To what extent do differences in school attendance contribute to racial/ethnic and economic inequalities in academic achievement among children in Grade 3 and younger?

Why This Study

As is the case for many districts around the country, attendance is a high priority for the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD). With MMSD already invested in efforts around increasing attendance and having added attendance to its accountability metrics, this study investigates how much missing school mattered for the academic progress of MMSD students.

Main Findings

Unexcused absences had a much stronger association with achievement growth than excused absences. Each additional absence above three days had a much more modest association with learning than those first critical absences. Students from low-income families, African American students, Latinx students, and students with parents whose education stopped at high school were more likely to have unexcused absences than other students. Finally, the observed association between attendance and achievement growth was almost entirely accounted for by student background characteristics: unexcused absences, in particular, appear to signal other challenges students may face, rather than being a cause of inequalities in academic achievement.

Project in Practice

The findings took both the researchers and the school district by surprise and as such, caused much discussion. The researchers were able to share the research with other scholars and plan additional publication routes. At the district, staff struggled to make sense of the work and understand how the district should respond to the findings, given that attendance work was already underway and it is unclear what action, if any, can be taken in response to the findings. For the partnership itself, this research inspired new discussions around the partnership's role in sensemaking and how partnership work can be a win-win for both practitioners and researchers.

MARZANO RESEARCH

FOUNDED
2008

JOINED NNERPP
2018

PARTNERS
As part of a network of 10 regional educational laboratories funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, REL Central serves the education needs of seven Central states through six research alliances and four research partnerships. Outside of REL Central, Marzano Research engages in other research practice partnerships to address stakeholder problems of practice.

MISSION
Marzano Research, through REL Central and other research projects, works in collaboration with school districts, state departments of education, and other stakeholders to address high-leverage needs.

ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS
ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/central/publications

Websites
marzanoresearch.com
ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/central/index

Twitter
@RELCentral

PROJECTS

UNDERSTANDING RURAL TEACHER WORKFORCE DYNAMICS AND FACTORS RELATED TO TEACHER MOBILITY AND ATTRITION IN FOUR STATES [ONGOING]

Why This Study
To better understand the dynamic and geographic character of the teacher labor market, including factors related to mobility and attrition, in rural and nonrural settings in Colorado, Missouri, Nebraska, and South Dakota, this in-progress study will examine teacher workforce dynamics and the relationship between teacher mobility and attrition and various teacher, school, and district characteristics.

Research Questions
The study will examine the following research questions:

- To what extent is the teacher workforce in four REL Central region states characterized by classroom teachers who are entrants (entering the state public school system), stayers (remaining in the same school), movers (moving to a different school or district), and leavers (taking a non-teaching position or exiting the state public school system) in rural and nonrural settings, and by state, county, and district?
- How does the prevalence of classroom teachers who are entrants, stayers, movers, and leavers vary according to characteristics of teachers, schools, and districts in rural and nonrural settings?
- How long do classroom teachers stay in the same classroom teaching position, and how does tenure in position vary in rural and nonrural settings and according to characteristics of teachers, schools, and districts?
- To what extent are characteristics of teachers, schools, and districts related to classroom teacher mobility and attrition in rural and nonrural settings?

WHAT FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS MATTER FOR ALGEBRA I SUCCESS? [ONGOING]

Why This Study
Students who struggle in Algebra I often do not enroll in higher-level math courses. In order to succeed in Algebra I, students need certain foundational knowledge and skills. The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MO DESE) wants to learn more about the particular knowledge and skills associated with success in Algebra I to support educators in better identifying students who are ready for Algebra I and those who need more support prior to enrolling.

Research Questions
To support those goals, this in-progress study will examine the following research questions:

- Which of the five mathematics concept scores (ratios and proportions, number system, expressions and equations, geometry, statistics and probability) on the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) grade 7 mathematics assessment are associated with MAP Algebra I End-of-Course (EOC) assessment scores for grade 8 students taking Algebra I during the 2015/16 school year?
- Are particular combinations of foundational skills (across the five concept scores) associated with Algebra I success?

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

JOINED NNERPP

2017

PARTNERS

Abt Associates

American Institutes for Research

Center for the Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research

MIT School Effectiveness and Inequality Initiative

The National Bureau of Economic Research

MISSION

Helping the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Massachusetts districts and schools implement effective policy and programs and make effective resource use decisions to improve student outcomes.

ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS

doe.mass.edu/research/reports

Note that there are four Massachusetts partnerships, only two of which are highlighted here for the purposes of this report. Visit the state department's website for more on all four partnerships.

Website

doe.mass.edu/research/reports

Twitter

@MASchoolsK12

PROJECTS

CAN SUCCESSFUL CHARTER SCHOOLS REPLICATE?

Research Questions

- Did policymakers designate the most effective charter schools as proven providers?
- Did expansion campuses successfully replicate the effectiveness of their parent campuses? If so, why was replication successful?

Why This Study

In 2010, Massachusetts raised the state's cap on the share of funding dedicated to charter school tuition payments in low-performing districts, including Boston. Charter operators with track records of success were labeled "proven providers" by the state and permitted to expand existing campuses or open new schools. As a result, the number of charter schools in Boston increased from 16 to 32 between 2010 and 2014. This study examines changes in the effectiveness of Boston's charter middle school sector during this period of rapid expansion.

Main Findings

Policymakers successfully identified the most effective charter schools as proven providers. Proven providers sustained large impacts on student test scores and replicated their effectiveness at expansion campuses. Further analysis indicates that successful replication might be due to charter schools using a highly standardized model that limited variation in practices across schools and classrooms. This standardized approach may have played an important role in the successful replication of charter schools in Boston.

Project in Practice

This research suggests that policies like the proven provider law, which use past success as a criterion for expansion or replication, may be a powerful tool to help interventions maintain effectiveness at larger scale.

EDUCATOR EVALUATION PARTNERSHIP [ONGOING WORK]

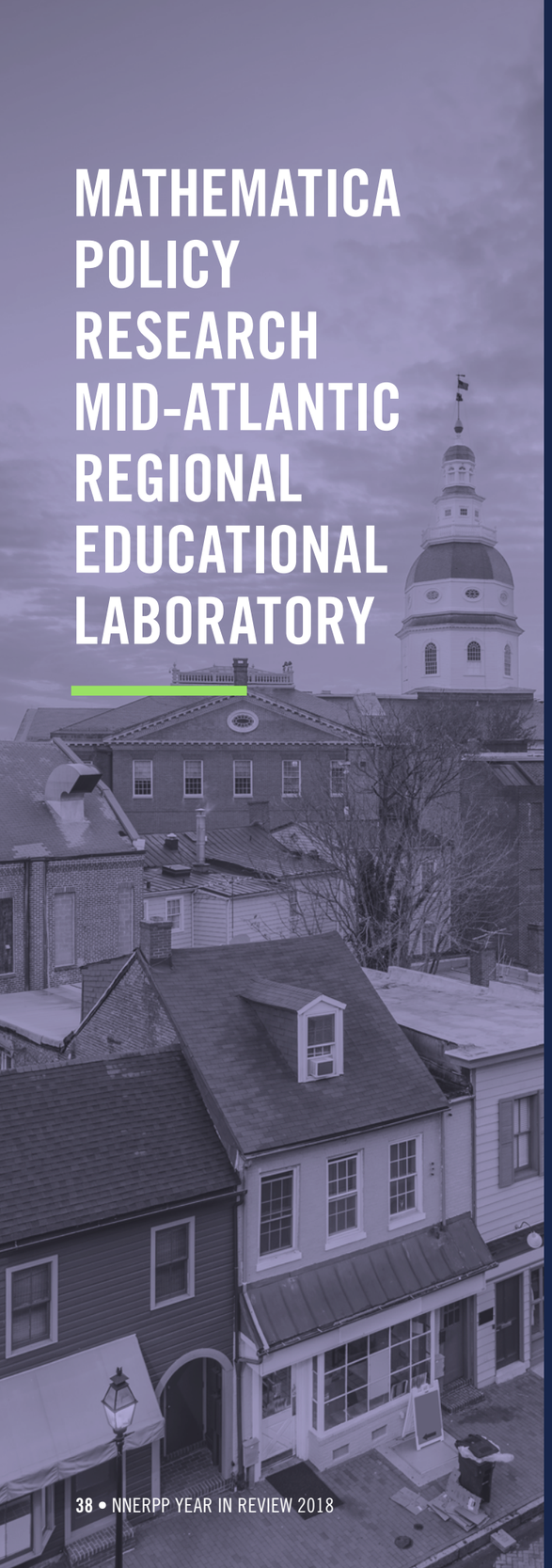
Why This Partnership

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and Abt Associates are partnering to better prepare and evaluate educators in Massachusetts. Specifically, the partnership is currently studying the implementation of the Candidate Assessment of Performance, a newly developed performance measure designed to assess teacher candidates' readiness to teach on the same performance standards that are used to evaluate in-service teachers. In this ongoing work, the partnership has learned about the educators who support CAP, the teacher candidates who experience the assessment, and CAP's impact on teacher preparation programs. The research found that CAP is reshaping the roles and responsibilities of both supervising practitioners and program supervisors as they shift away from the mentoring roles typical under the prior system to more formal evaluator roles under CAP. Providers believe CAP to be an improvement over the prior assessment system, and strong relationships between providers and districts strengthen CAP implementation.

Project in Practice

Through survey questions in DESE's annual practitioner survey, the partnership learned that fewer than half of surveyed supervising practitioners reported that they received sufficient training on CAP and its components in 2017. In response, DESE released an online module series as a supplement to trainings offered by preparation programs. The new module series serves to better explain the CAP process and their responsibilities to supervising practitioners. Additionally, a diagnostic tool (initially developed as a research instrument) to help assess the quality of feedback provided to teacher candidates will be made available to supervising practitioners in the coming year, based on initial analyses revealing substantial variation in the quality of feedback candidates received.

MATHEMATICA POLICY RESEARCH MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY



FOUNDED
2017

JOINED NNERPP
2018

PARTNERS

Mathematica Policy Research
Mid-Atlantic Regional Educational Laboratory
Additional partners

MISSION

REL Mid-Atlantic works to bridge the worlds of education research and education practice to improve academic outcomes for students through supporting collaborative research partnerships and other stakeholder groups in the Mid-Atlantic region.

ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS

ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midatlantic/worksinprogress.asp

Website

mathematica-mpr.com/our-publications-and-findings/projects/mid-atlantic-regional-educational-laboratory

Twitter

@RELMidAtlantic
@MathPolResearch

PROJECTS

DISPROPORTIONALITY IN SCHOOL DISCIPLINE: AN UPDATED ASSESSMENT IN MARYLAND THROUGH 2017 [ONGOING]

Why This Study

The Maryland State Department of Education is seeking to better understand trends in, and school characteristics associated with, disproportionate rates of exclusionary discipline for students based on race/ethnicity and disability status in order to address issues related to disproportionate exclusionary discipline.

Research Questions

In an ongoing research study, REL Mid-Atlantic is investigatIng the following research questions:

- What are the trends in school removals (out-of-school suspensions and expulsions) in Maryland from 2009–2010 to 2016–2017, both overall and by student group?
- What are the overall trends in characteristics of disciplinary responses during this period?
- What are the characteristics of schools with discipline disproportionalities?

EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF STRUCTURED RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING TEACHER HOME VISITING ON STUDENT AND TEACHER OUTCOMES [ONGOING]

Why This Study

The District of Columbia Public Schools' (DCPS) Family Engagement Partnership (FEP) and Family Engagement Collaborative (FEC) programs conducted structured teacher home visits during the 2013–2014 through 2016–2017 school years to improve parent engagement. This retrospective, quasi-experimental study will evaluate the impacts of these home visits on 1st- to 5th-grade teachers' mobility and 1st- to 5th-grade students' attendance, behavior, achievement, and perceptions related to parent engagement. A supplementary analysis will analyze the student outcomes up to 8th grade. The study will examine impacts of the home visit during the school year and for up to three years after the home visit.

Research Questions

The study will focus on two primary research questions:

- What is the impact of structured relationship-building teacher home visits on student behavior, such as regular on-time attendance and disciplinary incidents?
- Do home visits conducted earlier in the school year have different impacts than home visits conducted later in the school year?

MULTNOMAH COUNTY PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION RESEARCH

FOUNDED
2011

JOINED NNERPP
2016

PARTNERS
Centennial School District
David Douglas School District
Gresham-Barlow School District
Northwest Evaluation Association
Parkrose School District
Portland Public Schools
Reynolds School District
School of Education
at the University of Portland

MISSION
Using results-driven data to increase learning and equity.

Website
sites.up.edu/edresearch

PROJECTS

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING

Research Questions

What best practices can school districts and teachers use with their culturally diverse students?

Why This Study

The student population in the David Douglas School District has become increasingly diverse. Meanwhile, teachers of color make up less than 20% of the teacher workforce. Continued research is needed to ensure educational experiences for diverse groups of students occur.

Main Findings

First, schools who incorporate Culturally Responsive Teaching practices and mentalities positively impact their students and families. Schools can form communities with their students' parents by creating networks centering around families' unique cultural backgrounds. One way to do this is to allow diverse families' voices (through feedback or participation) and opinions into school frameworks and decisions. Second, schools can provide professional learning opportunities or give teachers coaching that is centered around Culturally Responsive Teaching. For example, teachers might use visuals that reflect their students' cultural backgrounds and welcome each student by name each day, with appropriate pronunciation. Third, schools can review students' academic and disciplinary data on a monthly basis to ensure cultural biases are not occuring and provide supports as necessary to close the opportunity gap.

Project in Practice

David Douglas Curriculum Director, Brooke O'Neill, reported benefits and implications of the research, describing how the literature review: (a) helped confirm ideas held within the district, (b) helped the district reinforce existing efforts, c) allowed more rich discussions to occur, and (d) informed implementation of several action items, including providing professional development.

EARLY KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION

Research Questions

What is the impact of a pre-kindergarten program?

Why This Study

Portland Public Schools implements a pre-kindergarten program to help meet the increasing academic demands placed on kindergarten students, and desired information about the impacts of its programmatic investment.

Main Findings

The pre-kindergarten transition program has positively impacted students in a variety of ways. Eight years of student data showed that the program increased its student population from 34 students to 208 incoming kindergarten students. Students who attended the program consistently had significantly higher kindergarten attendance rates than students who did not participate in the program. There did not appear to be an impact, however, on kindergarten literacy scores.

Project in Practice

Early Learners Program Manager for Portland Public Schools, Nancy Hauth, appreciated these findings, using them to improve data collection and tracking, as well as expand the program. In addition, the district created and widely distributed a research brief based on the data to market the program.

NORTHWESTERN EVANSTON EDUCATION RESEARCH ALLIANCE

FOUNDED
2017

JOINED NNERPP
2018

PARTNERS

Northwestern University
Illinois Public School District #202 (Evanston Township High School)
Illinois Public School District #65 (Evanston-Skokie K-8)

MISSION

Equity and excellence in education in Evanston.

Website

ocep.northwestern.edu/data-partnerships

PROJECTS

ON TRACK INDICATORS [ONGOING]

Research Questions

- What malleable factors can predict post-graduate success from high school and being on track in high school from middle school?
- How can those factors be combined into formulae to model students' overall probabilities of post-graduate success?
- What factors are most important among those that are malleable and can be tracked well early enough to change?
- How important are they?
- How do these factors the district can impact interact with others over which the district has less control to predict post-graduate success?

Why This Study

Building off the success of the UChicago Consortium work to create and implement a set of indicators for high school graduation, the Evanston school districts wanted to have a tool to address students' needs and improve outcomes for them as well. The Evanston context, however, is quite different from Chicago Public Schools. About 95% of students graduate, and most of the variation in student success appears in post-secondary persistence. Additionally, its smaller size means it may be in a position to use more nuanced measures because it has more control implementation.

Main Findings

This project is in progress and does not have publishable findings yet. However, we have confirmed several things that national research has shown, such as grades being highly predictive. We have also found points at which looking at Evanston students in particular is more fruitful. For example, ACT college readiness benchmarks, while they may predict grades in freshman year courses, do not represent inflection points in college persistence, and most Evanston students score above those benchmarks regardless. We hope to have a model by the end of February and some thresholds for addressing students' needs by the end of the school year.

Project in Practice

The goals for these models and factors are to be able to: address students' needs early, inform instruction and practice, provide feedback for program improvement, and monitor high level trends.

SCHOOL BUS ROUTING [ONGOING]

Research Questions

- To what extent do aspects of transportation such as distance to school, time on bus, or distance to bus stop differ across the District 65 [Evanston's K-8 district] student population?
- How do these aspects differ by race, by free/reduced lunch status, by TWI/ESL program enrollment, by neighborhood, and by school?
- How does changing bus routes potentially affect these variations?
- How does changing attendance boundaries potentially affect these variations?

Why This Study

Last year, financial pressures led the district to consider its bus transportation options. Karen Smilowitz, a parent in the district and logistics and operations engineering professor at Northwestern University, offered to look into potential route optimization for cost. As cost is not the only concern with school bus routing, this project has evolved to consider not only optimizing for cost, but also optimizing for equity in student experience, and providing the district with tools to do so. This larger project is now NSF funded.

Main Findings

The initial work just looking at cost saving measures found that the predicted changes necessary to make large differences in cost (e.g. saving the district enough money to balance the political and financial cost of change) would have potentially adverse impacts on the student experience of bus routes. There were small changes though that could improve student experience. The current thrust of this project toward balancing equity, student experience, and cost, is in progress and does not have findings yet.

Project in Practice

As an engineering project, it is largely about designing a way to model changes in student populations and predict effects on bus cost and equity and providing a data visualization and manipulation tool to the district. The hope is that the district will be better positioned to make transportation decisions and policies in the future.

ODE/OSU ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER PARTNERSHIP

FOUNDED
2014

JOINED NNERPP
2018

PARTNERS
Oregon Department of Education
Oregon State University

MISSION
Using research to improve education for English Language Learners in Oregon.

ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS
blogs.oregonstate.edu/odeosuellpartnership/?cat=753648

Website
blogs.oregonstate.edu/odeosuellpartnership

PROJECTS

UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF RECENTLY ARRIVED IMMIGRANT ENGLISH LEARNER STUDENTS

Purpose

This report seeks to guide state and local education agencies on how best to support recently arrived immigrant English learners (RAIELs), a diverse group including refugee students, migrant students, unaccompanied minors, students with limited or interrupted formal education, and students with disabilities. The report provides an overview of RAIEL education, outlining what is in place, what needs remain, and agencies' perceptions of successes and challenges. It concludes with a series of policy recommendations.

Why This Guide

RAEILs are a critically important, but often overlooked and poorly understood student population. There is limited understanding of who RAIELs are as a student group and how their needs differ from those of English learners more broadly.

Main Findings

In both states examined in the study, RAEILs scored similarly in standardized tests to other English learner students, but far below non-immigrant, native English speakers. Their graduation rates ranged from 30 to 60 percent. For one state there was information available about the services RAEILs receive: It showed that few were served in specialized newcomer programs and most received sheltered content instruction and separate ELD classes at the middle and high school levels. RAEILs would benefit from targeted supports that address a continuum of needs.

Project in Practice

Our practice-side partners at the ODE are reflecting on the results of this report as they consider potential policy shifts for high school course-taking among RAEILs. Since Oregon school districts range in terms of age-out policies for secondary students, more flexible age-out policies and extended-year graduation plans are being considered on behalf of RAEILs.

HIDDEN PROGRESS OF MULTILINGUAL STUDENTS ON NAEP

Research Questions

This study uses National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) data to explore whether and how much U.S. multilingual students' achievement improved between 2003 and 2015.

Why This Study

The dominant narrative on English Language Learners' academic achievement says that they are perpetually struggling and schools are continuously failing to serve their needs. However, by considering the broader group of multilingual students, defined as students who report a primary home language or languages other than English, we get a more accurate picture of actual promising trends in academic gains that are obscured when researchers and policymakers focus only on those students currently classified as English learners.

Main Findings

Multilingual students grew substantially in math and reading scores between 2003 and 2015. In fact, these students, at grades 4 and 8, grew at a rate two to three times greater than their monolingual peers. This finding challenges the misperception that multilingual students experience little academic gain.

Project in Practice

As a result of previous ODE/OSU partnership research on this issue, ODE began collecting and analyzing data for "Ever-EL" students in 2013. ODE continues to extend its use of this metric for a variety of reporting and accountability purposes. For example, there's a possibility of analyzing enrollment data for Ever-ELs vs. "Never-ELs" in programs such as Seal of Biliteracy. ODE leaders and partnership researchers are also sharing "Ever-EL" reporting practices with leaders of other state agencies and the federal government in blog posts, webinars, conference presentations, and ongoing conversations.

PARTNERSHIP FOR EARLY EDUCATION RESEARCH

FOUNDED
2014

JOINED NNERPP
2018

PARTNERS

Yale School of Medicine
Cooperative Educational Services
Education Development Center, Inc.
Connecticut State Department of Education
Connecticut Office of Early Childhood
Communities of Bridgeport, Norwalk, and Stamford

MISSION

Producing research that can inform early childhood education policy and practice at the local and state levels, increase access to high-quality early childhood education, and reduce disparities in educational outcomes.

ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS

medicine.yale.edu/psychiatry/peer/publications

Website

medicine.yale.edu/psychiatry/peer

PROJECTS

ASSESSING KINDERGARTEN ENTRY SKILLS IN CONNECTICUT: THE KINDERGARTEN ENTRANCE INVENTORY, 2010-2013

Research Questions

- What is the overall performance of children on the Connecticut Kindergarten Entrance Inventory (KEI)?
- Are there group differences in KEI scores?
- Are there district differences in KEI scores?

Why This Study

The Connecticut Kindergarten Assessment Inventory (KEI) was developed to measure the skills children demonstrate at kindergarten entry across six domains (Language, Literacy, Numeracy, Physical/Motor, Creative/Aesthetic, and Personal/Social). Partnership stakeholders wanted to learn more about the kindergarten readiness of children across Connecticut and the extent to which student groups differed and types of districts differed on this measure.

Main Findings

Teachers rated students higher in creative/aesthetic and physical/motor skill domains than in other domains, and overall skill levels were relatively stable over time. Gender gaps were small while gaps involving free and reduced lunch status were large: the largest gap was for those qualifying for free lunch compared to those who were not eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The gap between English learner and English-proficient students was one of the largest demographic gaps in this study. Compared to White students, Black and Hispanic students, on average, showed larger gaps in skill ratings than did Asian students. Additionally, teachers in small districts and districts with fewer students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch rated their students higher than teachers in large school districts and districts with more students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch.

PARTNERING TO SUPPORT EARLY CHILDHOOD DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS [ONGOING]

Research Questions

- What are the existing policies and supports for dual language learner (DLL)/English learner (EL) children within preschool and kindergarten settings in PEER communities?
- How are existing policies and supports for DLL children and their families associated with child and family outcomes, such as child attendance or family-teacher relationship quality?

Why This Study

Over the past several years, PEER members have noted that their organizations struggle to find actionable information about how to address the needs of their DLL children. Practitioners find it difficult to wade through the growing body of research to identify "best practices." In addition, researchers and practitioners agree that new programs and strategies cannot be implemented effectively without considering the teacher, student, and family characteristics of specific settings. This study seeks to provide actionable information about how to better serve DLLs and their families.

Main Findings

Between February and April 2018, over 700 parents, teachers, and administrators completed a survey, representing 34 schools and centers across Bridgeport, Norwalk, and Stamford. Approximately 65% of parent respondents reported that they speak at least one language other than English with their child. The vast majority of parents responded favorably to questions about family-teacher relationship quality. Teachers provided information about current policies and supports for DLLs, and their perceptions of family-teacher relationship quality. Participating sites/schools received individualized summaries of survey responses. The next phase is an examination of the association at the center/school-level between current DLL policies and supports and child/family outcomes.

Project in Practice

This descriptive study was designed to show the state of kindergarten readiness gaps at a specific point in time. Despite some concerns over the KEI measure (anticipated to be replaced by a new kindergarten entry assessment), several practitioner partners voiced that the study aligned with their understanding of the achievement and opportunity gaps that are present at entry to kindergarten for Connecticut children. PEER hopes that the findings can serve as comparison points for future studies examining gaps in kindergarten entry skills.

Project in Practice

PEER practitioner partners expressed their appreciation for the information provided in the site-level reports. One district partner said, "This information is great! I am looking forward to sharing the information with the schools and continuing the conversations on what we can do to improve or what we are doing really well." A community partner said, "I really find [these results] to be very informative. They will serve as a useful tool as we continue to plan strategies and activities to support our English language learners and their families."

PROJECTS

PARTNERSHIP FOR PRE-K IMPROVEMENT

FOUNDED
2017

JOINED NNERPP
2018

PARTNERS
University of Washington
Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families
Education Northwest
Tennessee Department of Education
Tennessee Education Research Alliance
Oregon Department of Education
Oregon School Readiness Research Consortium

MISSION
Facilitating a national early learning strategy to improve Pre-K across the participating states through state-led efforts.

The Partnership for Pre-K Improvement (PPI) is a multi-year, cross-sectoral project funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation focusing on improving the quality of state-funded pre-k programs. Utilizing knowledge gained from these improvement processes, our goal is to inform statewide improvement of early learning systems in other parts of the nation. The central aims of the project are: first, to facilitate research-practice with state partners; second, to strengthen the state partners' role in continuous quality improvement of these programs; and third, to conduct a process evaluation of the statewide quality improvement efforts.

As a part of this process, three separate research-practice partnership are now established in Washington, Oregon, and Tennessee. The goal is to create ongoing, sustainable partnerships between the state early learning leaders and research organizations that support collaboration on continuous quality improvement and evidence-based decision making. The partnership is in its early stages and is currently working to determine individual state priorities and research agendas and determining how these overlap to form collaborations.

PHILADELPHIA EDUCATION RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

FOUNDED
2011

JOINED NNERPP
2016

PARTNERS

Local university faculty
Philadelphia's charter school sector
Research for Action
School District of Philadelphia

MISSION

To provide timely, actionable, rigorous, and non-partisan research on the most pressing issues facing Philadelphia public education. To do this, PERC seeks to engage the region's colleges and universities, nonprofits, and the Philadelphia public education sector, including both district and charter schools, in respectful, mutually beneficial research-practice partnerships.

ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS

phledresearch.org/focus-areas

Website

phledresearch.org

Twitter

@PHLedResearch

PROJECTS

GETTING ON TRACK TO GRADUATION: NINTH GRADERS' CREDIT ACCUMULATION IN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA, 2014-2016

Research Questions

What percentage of the School District of Philadelphia's (SDP) first-time ninth graders were on track to high school graduation at the end of their first year in high school? Among off-track students, how many course requirements were incomplete? Which requirements were they missing? Which students were most often on track to graduation at the end of ninth grade? How did the percentage of students who were on track to graduation differ across high schools?

Why This Study

9th grade is a critical year. First year high schoolers who transition smoothly and earn the required credits are more likely to graduate within four years than students who struggle. The School District of Philadelphia recently developed a new Ninth Grade On-Track Definition, and this project applies the Definition retrospectively to several cohorts of students to serve as a benchmark against which progress can be measured.

Main Findings

67% of students were on track at the end of their 9th grade year. A key contribution of the study is a way of describing how far off track students are: almost on-track (missing one requirement); moderately off-track (missing two or three requirements); and far off-track (missing four or more requirements). Of off-track students, more than 40% were missing just one of the five requirements while 22% of off-track students were missing four or five requirements, meaning they were essentially an entire year behind. Schools with lower on-track rates had a higher percentage of students that were far off track and were serving more special education students, English learners, and students from low-income families.

Project in Practice

This report, and a follow-up brief, are intended to illustrate the importance to district leaders and the public of (1) tracking indicators over time, using consistent definitions; (2) examining subgroups of off-track students; and (3) using data to understand which student groups and schools are improving (or not) over time in order to provide feedback to the system. The district incorporated some of the measures and graphics used in this report into its dashboard for high school principals, and the analysis has been part of principal professional development.

TEACHER MOBILITY IN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA, 2009-10 THROUGH 2015-16

Research Questions

The study examined four research questions around the teachers who exited their schools from the 2009-10 through 2015-16 school years, including where they went, their characteristics, and characteristics of the schools they exited and entered.

Why This Survey

Teachers are the most important influence in schools on student achievement, making attracting and retaining excellent teachers a high priority for districts. Teacher mobility is disproportionately concentrated in urban school districts and has negative consequences for student performance. Therefore, it is critical for policymakers and school leaders in Philadelphia to have a clear picture of the extent and nature of teacher mobility.

Main Findings

On average, 27 percent of teachers exited their schools in a given school year, either to transfer to another school in the district or to leave the district entirely. Of those who left the district, about 10 percent taught in another Pennsylvania public school during the following school year. Mobility was highest among teachers with the fewest years of experience in education and among those with the most experience. Teachers of mathematics, science, and English were more mobile than others. Mobile teacher typically switched to schools that have fewer minority students, fewer low-income students, and higher math and ELA achievement.

Project in Practice

The study was the first of a new type of partnership for PERC: a collaboration with a faculty member and students in a graduate research class. The students were co-authors on the report. The report received a lot of attention in Philadelphia, generating local news coverage and encouraging conversations about how to better retain and support Philadelphia's teachers.

RESEARCH ALLIANCE FOR NEW YORK CITY SCHOOLS

FOUNDED
2008

JOINED NNERPP
2016

PARTNERS
New York University
The City University of New York (CUNY)
The NYC Department of Education (NYC DOE)
Various other research institutions and organizations that work in and around NYC schools

MISSION
Conducting rigorous studies on topics that matter to the City's public schools. The Research Alliance strives to advance equity and excellence in education by providing nonpartisan evidence about policies and practices that promote students' development and academic success.

ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS
steinhardt.nyu.edu/research_alliance/research/projects

Website
ranycs.org

Twitter
@RANYCS

PROJECTS

EXPLORING THE PATHWAYS AND OUTCOMES OF STUDENTS WHO DON'T GRADUATE IN FOUR YEARS, BUT REMAIN ENROLLED IN NYC HIGH SCHOOLS

Research Questions

Who are these "persisting" students, and how did they fall behind? What schools do they attend? What supports do persisting students (and the educators who work with them) see as most valuable? How many of these students ultimately drop out, and how many manage to graduate?

Why This Study

Over the past decade, New York City's high school graduation rate has risen dramatically, yet roughly a quarter of each entering 9th-grade class still does not graduate on time. Some of these students permanently drop out, but a much larger percentage actually stay enrolled (or re-enroll after temporarily leaving school) and continue working toward their diploma. The fact that these persisting students continue to have a connection to the education system offers meaningful opportunities to intervene.

Main Findings

Reflecting system-wide inequalities, persisting students are disproportionately Black or Latino and male, and more likely to be living in poverty. In middle school, they struggle academically. The study found that more than a third were chronically absent in 8th grade, with attendance rates declining even further in high school. Persisting students are concentrated in high-needs schools. Indeed, a quarter of them were enrolled in the same 20 schools during their 9th grade year—of more than 400 high schools citywide. Many students who fall behind are counseled into alternative settings, but decisions about when and where to move persisting students sometimes occur in an ad hoc fashion. Persisting students enter their fifth year of high school with a wide variety of academic needs: About a quarter have earned enough credits to graduate, but haven't passed all the required Regents exams. Another 30 percent are drastically behind, with years of coursework to complete. By the end of their sixth year, 44 percent of persisting students have earned a high school diploma; 19 percent are still enrolled, and 37 percent have dropped out or left the district.

Project in Practice

In June 2018, a diverse group of educators, scholars, district officials, and school and community leaders came together to discuss the results of this study. Their conversation underscored the need to identify at-risk students and intervene early, be more strategic about student placement, nurture supportive relationships with students, and tailor interventions to meet persisting students' varying needs.

THE EXPANDED SUCCESS INITIATIVE: CHALLENGES AND PROGRESS IN THE PURSUIT OF COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS FOR BLACK AND LATINO YOUNG MEN

Research Questions

How was the Expanded Success Initiative (ESI) designed and supported by the district? What services and activities did schools implement under ESI? To what extent did these services and activities align with the initiative's theory of action? What was ESI's impact on schools and students?

Why This Study

In New York City and nationwide, Black and Latino males face a host of educational disparities, including lower average high school graduation and college enrollment rates. In 2012, New York City launched the Expanded Success Initiative (ESI) in an effort to improve educational opportunities and increase college and career readiness among Black and Latino male students in 40 high schools. At the time, ESI was one of the largest investments ever dedicated to boosting the educational outcomes of Black and Latino males. It inspired many components of the national My Brother's Keeper (MBK) initiative and served as a model for other MBK communities across the country.

Main Findings

The Research Alliance's independent four-year evaluation found that while ESI led to notable improvements in school culture and support for Black and Latino young men, it did not boost their academic performance or college readiness. ESI provided schools with considerable autonomy and flexibility. Programs and student participation rates varied widely across schools. Overall, the study found that ESI increased Black and Latino young men's exposure to key activities and supports, including college trips and advising, mentoring, youth groups, tutoring, AP and IB classes, and culturally relevant coursework. Interviews with school leaders, teachers, and students highlighted improvements in school culture and relationships as a result of the initiative. Further, Black and Latino young men in ESI schools reported a stronger sense of belonging and fair treatment than their peers in comparison schools. However, ESI had little or no impact on students' attendance, suspension rates, academic performance, or college readiness and enrollment.

Project in Practice

Recent policy initiatives in New York City have emphasized several strategies that emerged as promising in the Research Alliance's study of ESI. These include attention to implicit bias in schools and efforts to expand culturally relevant curricula and instruction. The Research Alliance aims to continue learning about the implementation and impact of such strategies in a variety of settings.

STANFORD-SAN FRANCISCO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP

FOUNDED
2009

JOINED NNERPP
2016

PARTNERS

California Education Partners (partnership manager)
San Francisco Unified School District
Stanford University's Graduate School of Education

MISSION

Stanford University and San Francisco Unified School District work together to design research that informs policies, practice and scholarship to maximize the potential of every student in San Francisco and beyond.

PROJECT MAP

bit.ly/stanfordsfusdprojects20172018

Website
stanfordsfusd.org

Twitter
@StanfordSFUSD

PROJECTS

THE EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS OF HOMELESS AND HIGHLY MOBILE STUDENTS IN SAN FRANCISCO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Research Questions

- What is the size and distribution of homeless and highly mobile (HHM) students in SFUSD across different grades, schools, racial ethnicities, and language backgrounds?
- How heterogeneous is this student population in terms of chronicity of HHM status, instability of living arrangement, placement in foster care, and number of siblings?
- What promotes resilience and positive outcomes for HHM students?

Why This Study

In San Francisco, where both housing costs and income inequality continue to grow, the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) is increasingly focused on supporting homeless children and families. To inform this work, SFUSD partnered with Stanford University's Graduate School of Education (GSE) and John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities (Gardner Center) to conduct research aimed at helping SFUSD better track, understand, and support their HHM student population.

Main Findings

About 2,500 SFUSD students (4%) face homelessness or unstable housing each year. Concentration of HHM students varies from school to school. Hispanic and Black students are overrepresented in the HHM population. HHM students are about six times more likely to change SFUSD schools at least once during the school year compared to free lunch students (12% vs 2%), are more than twice as likely to be chronically absent (25% vs 11%), and are 2.5 times more likely to be suspended (4.4% vs 1.7%). They are more likely to experience lower GPA, standardized test scores, A-G completion, and high school graduation rates. Despite lower achievement on average, some HHM students show high academic achievement. Social and emotional learning skills relate to greater academic success.

Project in Practice

This project helped SFUSD learn more about the challenges experienced by their homeless students as well as the strengths they bring. Subsequent analysis helped the district understand the across-school implementation of HHM student services. Both analyses helped SFUSD leaders support a district-wide policy called Students and Families Experiencing Homelessness (SAFEH), which among other things provides more resources to help develop a stronger sense of belonging in the school communities and additional professional development for liaisons at school sites.

PRACTICAL MEASURES: SUPPORTING SHIFTS IN INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE USING STUDENT SURVEY DATA

Research Questions

- How might data from practical measures student surveys be displayed so they are of use to coaches and teachers?
- In what ways might coaches use practical measures data to support teachers in making shifts in their instructional practice?

Why This Study

Efforts to improve the quality of instruction require sound measures to assess whether instructional changes are occurring. Practical measures are brief student surveys that have the potential to support teachers in shifting their teaching. The practical measures used in this project – surveys of small-group discussions – provide information about the extent to which mathematics instruction is aligned with a particular vision of powerful classrooms, in which students' voices and ideas take center stage. As these surveys are a novel tool, however, little is known about how they might best be used to support instructional change.

Main Findings

We compiled pie and bar charts displaying the responses of one class of SFUSD students to the small-group survey. We then shared these charts with teachers and coaches to learn what they saw as the affordances and limitations of the displays. Participants found the data useful but asked for the displays to show how individual students and groups of students responded, as well as how students responded over time. In a second case study, a coach and teacher used the survey to study one student's perceptions of his participation in small group discussions. The teacher made several shifts in her teaching practice but was not convinced that positive changes in the student's survey responses were associated with these shifts. She suggested using the survey over a longer period of time to better understand the relationship between shifts in teaching practice and changes in student participation.

Project in Practice

SFUSD is presently incorporating practical measures in ongoing professional development (PD) with teacher leaders in the Problem-Solving Cycle project. In addition to discussing video-clips of students solving math tasks in small groups, PD facilitators are now asking teacher leaders to also consider students' answers to practical measures surveys, looking for alignment or inconsistencies between these data sources. Some teacher leaders have begun to do the same in their PD workshops with colleagues at their school sites.

TENNESSEE EDUCATION RESEARCH ALLIANCE

FOUNDED
2016

JOINED NNERPP
2017

PARTNERS
Tennessee Department of Education
Vanderbilt University

MISSION
The Tennessee Education Research Alliance is a research-policy-practice partnership committed to creating an expanding body of knowledge on a set of interrelated areas of focus that directly impact Tennessee's school improvement strategies.

ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS
peabody.vanderbilt.edu/TERA/

Website
peabody.vanderbilt.edu/TERA/

Twitter
@TNEdResAlliance

PROJECTS

EXPLORING TEACHER IMPROVEMENT IN TENNESSEE

Research Questions

How do individual teachers improve over the course of their careers?

Why This Study

It is widely recognized that boosting student educational outcomes requires improving the quality of classroom instruction. Yet, there is an enduring narrative in the policy and research world that teacher effectiveness is fixed - that a teacher is either effective or not. TERA's research explores this narrative further to understand more about how teachers in Tennessee improve throughout their careers, and what policy levers may lead to improvements in teacher quality across the state.

Main Findings

Teachers in Tennessee are improving over the course of their careers on average. This holds true across tested subjects and across measures of teacher effectiveness. While the majority (about 56%) of a teacher's improvement occurs in the first three years, roughly 20 to 30% of a teacher's overall improvement occurs between years 5 and 25. Teacher improvement varies substantially by district and school. Teachers in Tennessee appear to improve at about the same rates in higher-poverty schools as in lower-poverty schools. Teacher improvement appears to be steeper in more recent years.

Project in Practice

The research has given the Tennessee Department of Education a standard for what to expect in terms of a teacher's improvement across the course of his or her career. Now, the state is eager to learn more about what might explain the variation in improvement : What is going on in the places where teachers improve fastest, and what would it take to accelerate the pace of learning even further? Follow-up studies will examine this question and others about what is driving teacher improvement in Tennessee.

HOW PRINCIPALS DRIVE SCHOOL SUCCESS

Research Questions

Are principal observation ratings associated with student outcomes? What can we learn about how successful principals are generating better student results?

Why This Study

Researchers and policymakers have paid a lot of attention to Tennessee's statewide teacher evaluation system since its creation in 2011. Yet, redesigned principal evaluations and their ability to predict school outcomes have received far less attention, even in the face of broad agreement that principals are critical to school success. This is the first of a series of studies that TERA will release that aim to build our knowledge on what we know about effective school leadership.

Main Findings

The practice ratings that Tennessee principals are given as part of the evaluation system predict growth in student achievement. In other words, student gains are higher in schools where principals' leadership is rated more positively. Highly rated principals enjoy more positive teacher perceptions of school leadership and climate. Highly rated principals retain effective teachers at higher rates.

Project in Practice

The research points to the efficacy of Tennessee's principal evaluation system and demonstrates that principals are critical when it comes to improving student outcomes. The state is now interested in learning about the distribution of effective principals among schools across Tennessee and how it can best support the preparation and development of school leaders throughout the state.

UCHICAGO CONSORTIUM ON SCHOOL RESEARCH

FOUNDED
1990

JOINED NNERPP
2016

PARTNERS
University of Chicago
Chicago Public Schools

MISSION
Conducting research of high technical quality that can inform and assess policy and practice in the Chicago Public Schools and expanding communication among researchers, policymakers, and practitioners while supporting the search for solutions to the problems of school reform.

ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS
consortium.uchicago.edu/publications

Website
consortium.uchicago.edu

Twitter
@UChiConsortium

PROJECTS

SCHOOL CLOSINGS IN CHICAGO: STAFF AND STUDENT EXPERIENCES AND ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

Research Questions

- How did staff and students affected by school closings experience the school closings process and subsequent transfer into designated welcoming schools?
- What effect did closing schools have on closed and welcoming schools students' mobility, attendance, suspensions, test scores, and core GPAs?

Why This Study

The closing of 47 Chicago elementary schools at the end of the 2012-13 school year was highly controversial and caused major protests in the city, so it was important to have objective information about the outcomes to inform the continuing debates, as well as future decisions about closing schools.This study built on a 2015 Consortium study that looked at where students from closed schools enrolled and why.

Main Findings

Student and staff interviews highlighted the challenges of the school closings and mergers. It was difficult to adequately prepare schools in time to receive students because of the logistical issues involved in merging schools and uncertainty about how to prepare. Staff and students experienced a period of mourning and the merging of school cultures created challenging social dynamics. Test scores of students in both closed and welcoming schools were negatively affected: Scores of students from closed schools were lower than expected in the year of the announcement: roughly 1.5 months in reading and 2 months in math. Reading scores recovered after one year, but the negative effect on math scores persisted for four years. Students from welcoming schools showed lower reading test scores, about 1.5 months lower than expected, the first year after the merger, but these rebounded the following year.

Project in Practice

Project team members engaged in ongoing conversations with district officials during research, since the district was considering their processes for merging schools going forward. In media coverage, district officials talked about the implications of the work. A number of community groups have cited the 2018 school closings report to argue for support of neighborhood schools.

HOW DO PRINCIPALS INFLUENCE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT?

Research Questions

The role of the principal is complex, and there are many ways that principals might potentially influence classroom instruction and student learning. What matters most?

Why This Study

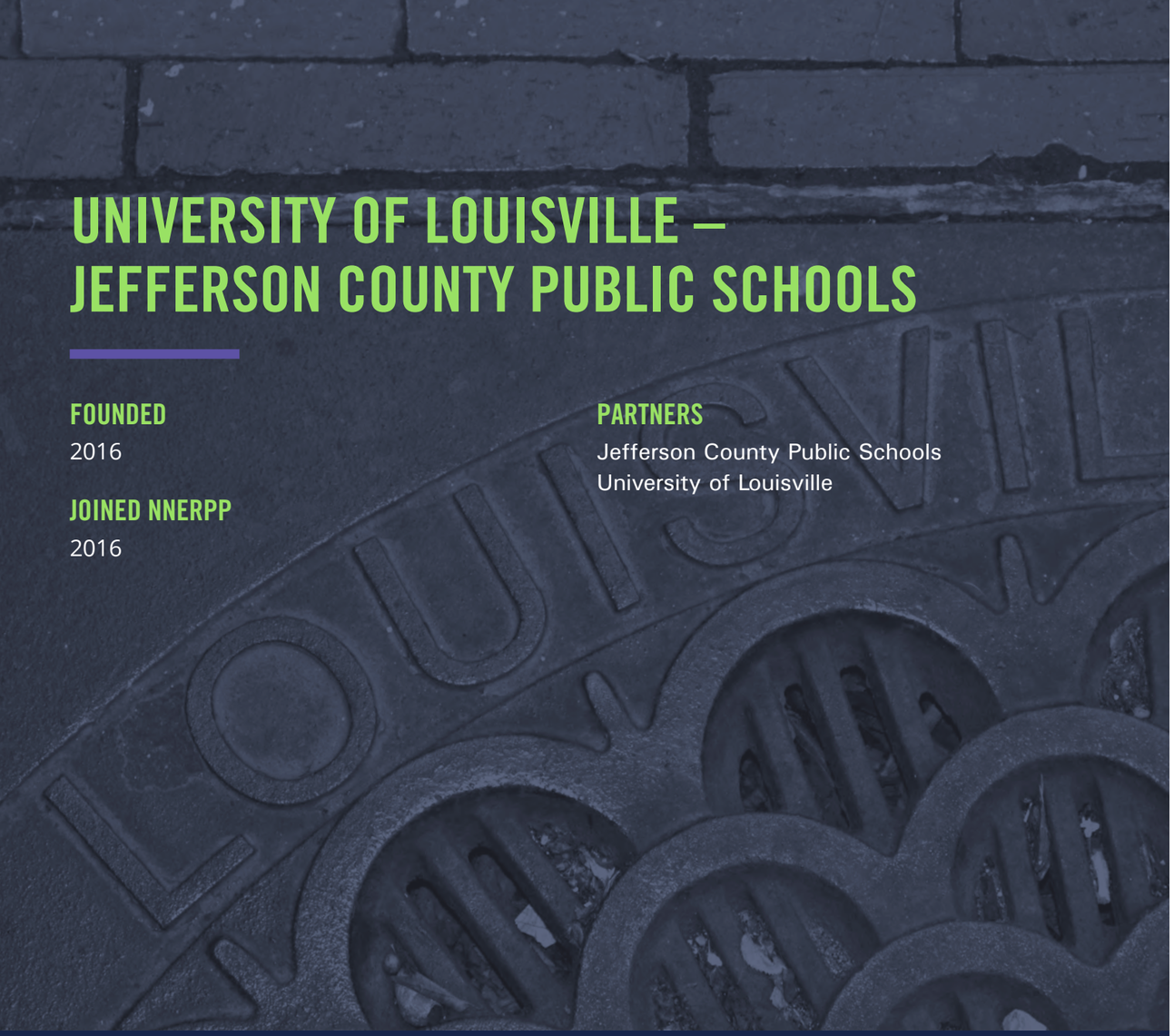
Principals are often seen as the primary agents of change to improve student achievement. Yet the role of the principal is complex, and there are many ways that principals might influence classroom instruction and student learning. What matters most? Researchers used data from hundreds of schools to learn how principals were most effective at achieving higher learning gains on standardized tests. Then, they visited 12 schools, interviewing principals and teachers to see firsthand what principals in schools with improving learning gains were doing that principals in schools without improving learning gains were not.

Main Findings

Schools with the highest learning gains had principals who promoted a strong school climate by empowering and coordinating the work of teachers and school staff around shared goals. Improvements in school climate set up all teachers and students to be successful. Successful principals develop systems for supporting teachers to support students; are skilled in organizing and supporting shared leadership among staff; and manage shared leadership by guiding, coordinating, and monitoring the work of teachers and leaders in the school.

Project in Practice

This short-form snapshot has been shared and used extensively among practitioners in the district. The Office of Teaching and Learning used it with all principals in the district via their principal training sessions. The Talent Office is using it in their work to promote teacher leadership. The researchers are attending a districtwide meeting of Network Chiefs to talk about the research in November. Conversations with and suggestions from practitioners who are using the snapshot helped the researchers identify next steps for their work, such as including case studies that could be used in professional learning sessions and FAQs about the quantitative analyses. The project has received considerable attention nationally as well. Referrals from an Ed Week blog on the study, penned by Ross Weiner of the Aspen Institute, broke the record for visits to the Aspen Institute's blog, indicating the broad interest and applicability.



UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE – JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FOUNDED
2016

JOINED NNERPP
2016

PARTNERS
Jefferson County Public Schools
University of Louisville

Website
louisville.edu/education/nnerpp

PROJECTS

DEEPER LEARNING FOR GREATER EQUITY [ONGOING WORK]

Research Questions

How do personnel in Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) understand and engage in the Deeper Learning Initiative? How do the schools that received the first Deeper Learning Grants compare to all to the schools in JCPS? How do these schools compare to those schools that applied but were not awarded the Deeper Learning grants? How do the schools that received the grants shift their practice, especially when this challenges the status quo? What conditions support significant shifts in practice? In particular, what happens when schools have access to outside support that aims to help shift their practice?

Why This Study

Deeper learning focuses on improving the powers of learners to think, communicate, and care throughout the day and throughout their learning journeys. At JCPS, initial work around deeper learning began in March 2016 and was followed by the Jefferson County Board of Education adopting a Deeper Learning Framework in June 2016. Over the next several years, the University of Louisville-Jefferson County Public Schools (UL-JCPS) partnership will study the program as it unfolds, spending time trying to understand how a new district program gets launched, is rolled out and adopted, and embraced by the district's schools.

Main Findings

This research is ongoing.

Project in Practice

By strengthening their partnership with the University of Louisville–one of their primary sources for educator recruitment and hiring–JCPS believe they can mutually benefit from the lessons learned from the research. The research will inform their system-wide implementation of deeper learning and deeper learning strategies and illuminate the benefits and potential challenges of deeper learning as an approach towards promoting excellence, equity, and personalized learning for all students.

BUILDING ON THE CULTURAL ASSETS OF MILL CREEK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL [ONGOING WORK]

Research Questions

Mill Creek Elementary is on a mission to eliminate exclusionary discipline, especially suspensions in their school practices. In particular, they are on a "stop suspending" campaign, and in partnership with the University of Louisville, in 2018-2019, have received a Transdisciplinary Consortium Social Justice grant to fund work on this project.

Why This Study

Like many urban districts, JCPS has struggled with suspensions, and in particular, disproportionate suspensions for young males of color.

Main Findings

Previous work between the University of Louisville and Mill Creek Elementary is showing promising data with Mill Creek showing a 20% reduction in suspensions from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018.

Project in Practice

This project will inform the rest of the district on promising practices to help address the disproportional suspensions that exist in JCPS. Mill Creek Elementary presented their early findings at the 2018 Deeper Learning Symposium and feedback was so positive they were asked to conduct a repeat session.

URBAN CHILD STUDY CENTER

FOUNDED
2013

JOINED NNERPP
2017

PARTNERS

The Urban Child Study Center (UCSC) is an interdisciplinary research center in the College of Education & Human Development at Georgia State University and includes several partnerships between the university, education agencies, and relevant community organizations.

MISSION

Promoting the overall development and school success of children and youth in urban contexts through innovative, translational research that informs policy and practice.

ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS

urbanchildstudy.education.gsu.edu/research-practice-partnerships

Website
urbanchildstudy.education.gsu.edu

PROJECTS

PARTNERSHIP FOR SCHOOL READINESS & ACHIEVEMENT FROM AGE 3 TO GRADE 3

Why This Partnership

The Partnership for School Readiness & Achievement from Age 3 to Grade 3 (or Atlanta 323, for short), within the Urban Child Study Center, is a collaboration designed to develop the research infrastructure of the school district, early learning partners, and its stakeholders to utilize data to inform decisions around Atlanta's preschool to third grade (P3) early childhood system.

Proposed Work

One key component of this work is to build an integrated longitudinal database linking school readiness and achievement data from preschool through 3rd grade. This longitudinal database will support Atlanta Public Schools and their partners in identifying opportunities and barriers to accessing high-quality early childhood education programs. This in turn will support the development of research-based and data-informed policies and practices to address issues related to enrollment, kindergarten transition, and attendance. Atlanta 323 partners will also connect to together create a cohesive vision and strategy for early learning for the city of Atlanta, supporting and guiding data-informed decision making by helping them weave together the patchwork data each agency or partner holds.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS IN SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

Many RPPs focus their work on vulnerable student populations who face difficulties associated with poverty, language and cultural differences, learning disabilities, or challenging behavior. These vulnerable students struggle to do well in school and often require wraparound supports and services to achieve school success. Community organizations are active in providing those supports and services, which is why the Urban Child Study Center works to actively involve them in partnership work. If their partnership is not a part of an RPP's research agenda and partnership activities, then the impact of their contributions to student success is lost. Actively partnering with community organizations allows RPPs to leverage the collective impact on student success. The Urban Child Study Center partners with community organizations in all of their RPP projects, and seeks to honor the community partner's interests by learning what's important to them, what they feel their most pressing issues are, and how they think the RPP can work together to address these issues. Community partners have a unique role in an RPP and we hope to promote their participation as a more standard practice across RPPs.

In Practice

Community partners value the relationship building aspect of partnership work, and how meaningful relationships impact the joint work and help "identify ways to accelerate each other's work," as one partner put it. These relationships "foster a community of sharing," another community partner said, which "leverages our collective resources to better inform our work at the program level and beyond." Engaging in RPP work can also be challenging for community organizations: Partners named the many players that can be involved in partnership work as a challenge they needed to learn to navigate. However, community partners agreed that a "meaningful" partnership's potential to really "convert [research] findings to make practice better and improve outcomes for kids" makes it all "worth it".

WISCONSIN EDUCATOR EFFECTIVENESS RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP

FOUNDED
2018

JOINED NNERPP
2018

PARTNERS

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Socially Responsible Evaluation in Education Center at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

PROJECTS

THE 2017-18 WISCONSIN EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT, SUPPORT, AND RETENTION SURVEY OF TEACHERS

Research Questions

How are district differences in the implementation of teacher evaluations associated with teacher perceptions of school leadership and teacher job satisfaction?

Why This Study

This study presents the statewide results from over 24,000 teachers regarding their experiences with teacher evaluations and how teacher evaluations relate to school social conditions. The results of this study have informed educators across Wisconsin about how to best implement teacher evaluations in a way that promotes positive teacher experiences.

Main Findings

The results demonstrate a close connection between how school districts implement teacher evaluations and the perceptions of their teachers across a number of school social factors, including the usefulness of performance feedback, principal effectiveness, and job satisfaction. Teachers in districts that provide adequate time and support to teachers to complete their evaluation process—as well as useful and accurate performance feedback—perceive their principals to be effective leaders and are more satisfied with their job.

Project in Practice

We worked closely with our practice partner to develop a plan for disseminating the results to Wisconsin educators. We used two primary methods to promote the use of the information for school and district continuous improvement. First, each of the 274 school districts that had at least 40% response rates received their own school and district reports of their results from the survey. These reports were organized according to the model of the teacher evaluation process that was developed from the study. Second, we worked with the 12 regional cooperative educational service agencies (CESAs) across Wisconsin to hold EE-Exchange Data retreats. These involved school leadership teams meeting with the research team at each CESA to review their survey results and to develop improvement plans for the following year.

WISCONSIN LEARNING-CENTERED TEACHER EVALUATION STUDY

Research Questions

- To what extent are schools implementing learning-centered teacher evaluation practices?
- How do local evaluation approaches contribute to changes in teaching practice?

Why This Study

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) designed the state educator effectiveness system to promote educator growth and continuous improvement through learning-centered evaluation. The DPI emphasizes 5 principles for learning-centered evaluation: 1) a context of trust that encourages risk-taking and learning from mistakes; 2) a common model of effective practice (i.e., the Framework for Teaching), to center conversations about teaching and inform professional learning within and outside the evaluation context; 3) educator-developed goals that are regularly referenced to frame the evaluation process; 4) cycles of continuous improvement guided by specific and timely feedback to drive practice; and 5) integration of evaluation practices with other school and district improvement strategies.

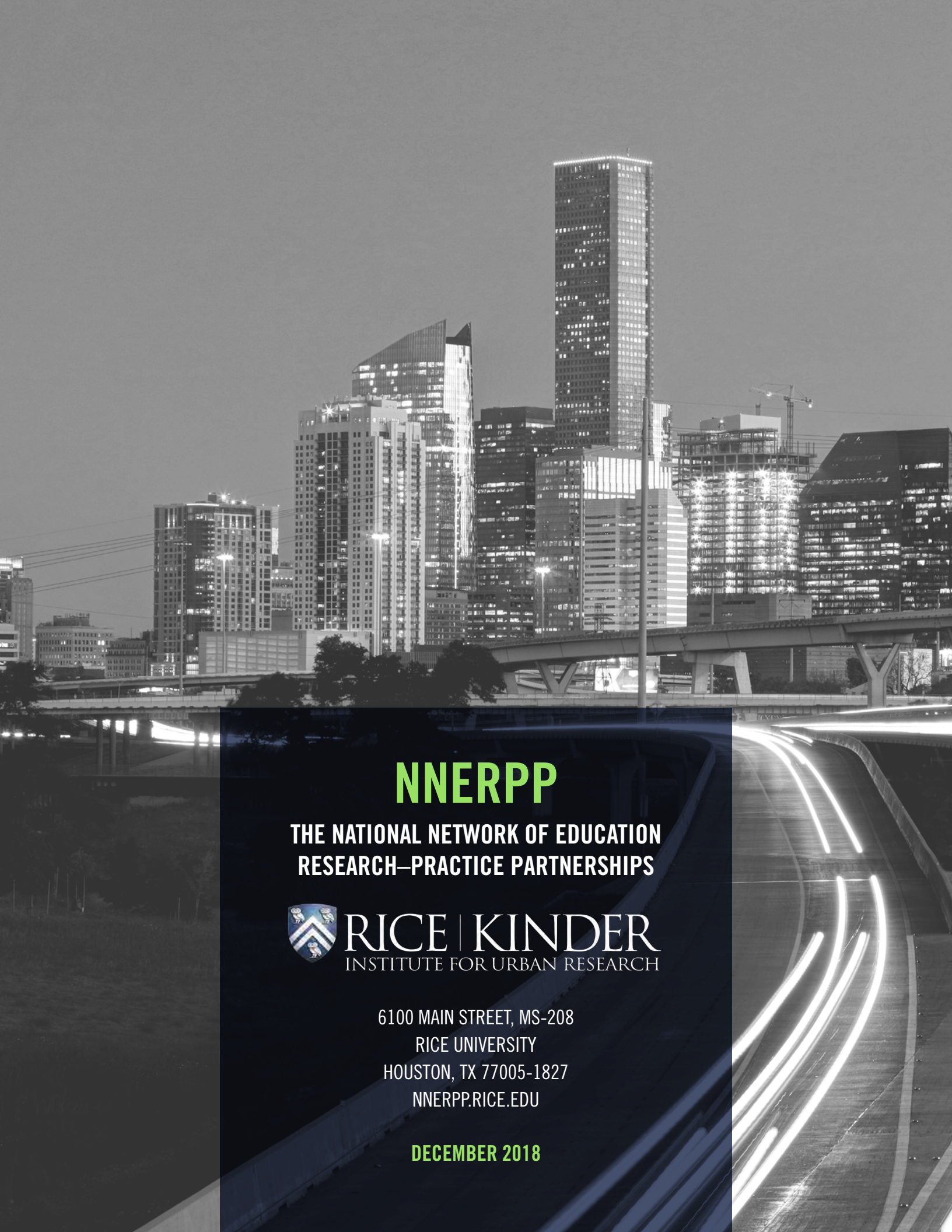
The study was conducted in schools within six districts that varied by size and geographic region. The study primarily applied qualitative methods to learn about teacher, evaluator, and instructional coach practices and to identify how those practices relate to the learning-centered evaluation principles.

Main Findings

- Participating schools are moving beyond minimum state requirements for educator effectiveness implementation and attempting learning-centered evaluation practices, with a particularly strong emphasis on establishing trust
- Practices across the schools help promote sustained instructional focus; provide a common instructional language; contribute to feedback from evaluators; and support collaboration among peers
- While the approaches in each site represent an annual cycle of improvement, shorter cycle observations, feedback, next step identification and follow-up were less common

Project in Practice

Districts were briefed on the study and have agreed to participate in a January 2019 panel presenting aspects of their approaches to learning-centered evaluation and what they may be doing differently or plan to do based on the findings. The report also includes suggestions for the DPI, other school districts, and state education stakeholders on how to support learning-centered evaluation practices.



NNERPP

THE NATIONAL NETWORK OF EDUCATION RESEARCH–PRACTICE PARTNERSHIPS

RICE | KINDER
INSTITUTE FOR URBAN RESEARCH

6100 MAIN STREET, MS-208
RICE UNIVERSITY
HOUSTON, TX 77005-1827
NNERPP.RICE.EDU

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