

Save the date! The final EEPS event for this cohort will take place on **July 28-29, 2011** in Washington, D.C. We look forward to going out with a bang!

Emerging Education Policy Scholars (EEPS) brings up-and-coming scholars to our nation's capital to meet with education-policy experts and to share and brainstorm exciting new directions for K-12 education research. The program's goals are twofold:

- 1) To foster an opportunity for talented, promising scholars to connect with other scholars in their field, as well as to introduce them to key players in the education policy arena; and
- 2) To expand the pool of talent and ideas from which the education policy arena currently draws.

The program is generously supported by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation.

Hello EEPS!

We hope this newsletter finds you happy, healthy, and ready for summer. We've been more than impressed reading through your recent updates and project abstracts featured in the following pages, and we're excited to learn more about your work at our next event in July. (Remember, if you'd like to broaden the audience for your research, you can submit studies to Fordham's weekly newsletter for review, or author a guest editorial—just email thegadfly@edexcellence.net with submissions. And if you'd like to pitch an idea for a working paper or education Outlook piece through AEI, please contact Daniel Lautzenheiser.)

It's business as usual at AEI and Fordham. The first week of May, AEI will host keynotes with Indiana governor Mitch Daniels and Los Angeles schools chief John Deasy. Later in the month, AEI will convene a major research conference that will examine lessons learned from the past fifty years in federal K-12 policy. Over at Fordham, we're finishing up a report on special education that examines trends in disability types over the past decade. We're also completing projects that examine charter-school pensions and the status of high-achieving students over time.

As usual, email jscull@edexcellence.net or daniel.lautzenheiser@aei.org with any business. We hope you enjoy the newsletter, and we look forward to seeing you in July!

New from AEI and Fordham

ESEA Briefing Book

By Chester E. Finn, Jr., and Michael J. Petrilli



With the Elementary and Secondary Education Act overdue for an update, Checker and Mike explore the ten key issues that policymakers must resolve in order to get reauthorization across the finish line. For each of the ten issues—which fall under the areas of standards and assessments, accountability, teacher quality, and flexibility and innovation—they chart a future path that radically revamps the federal role and reflects a “reform realist” approach to federal education policy.

The duo suggest that the federal government take the following steps: expect states to adopt rigorous standards and assessments and to maintain sophisticated data systems to improve transparency; eliminate AYP and allow states greater leeway in rating schools; allow states complete flexibility in deciding when/how to intervene in failing schools, which qualifications teachers must meet, whether to adopt teacher-evaluation systems, etc.; and turn reform-oriented formula grant programs (excluding Title I) into competitive ones.

Private Enterprise in American Education



The role of for-profit companies in public education has attracted increased scrutiny over the past few years. As this controversy heats up, sorely lacking is a discussion of how to harness the potential of such providers while erecting the incentives and accountability measures needed to ensure a level, dynamic, and performance-oriented playing field. The Private Enterprise in American Education project, a new paper series launched in April by AEI's Education Policy Studies department, aims to evaluate the role that for-profits can and should play in meeting America's 21st-century educational challenges cost-effectively and at scale.

In the first installment of the series, “Beyond Good and Evil: Understanding the Role of For-Profits in Education through the Theories of Disruptive Innovation,” Michael B. Horn of the Innosight Institute explains why policy makers and reformers who characterize for-profits and nonprofits as inherently “good” or “evil” are missing the point. More papers examining the role of for-profits are forthcoming in the series.

Recently Published

Customized Schooling Beyond Whole-School Reform

Ed. by Frederick Hess & Bruno Manno
Harvard Education Press

Most school reform efforts focus on “whole-school” solutions, attempting to carbon copy successful efforts like the KIPP academies or Teach for America by rebuilding entire schools or recruiting teachers who fit in the same aged job descriptions. This volume aims instead to reorient discussions about school reform by examining customized services and products that can meet the demands of schooling in smarter ways. It explores such ideas as: how market segmentation can be applied to public education; how tools such as weighted school funding, virtual schooling, and “education spending accounts” can allow greater “intra-school” choice for parents and students; and how data-collection reform can get away from one-size-fits-all metrics built for one-size-fits-all schooling. The sum of the volume is a new take on customized schooling designed to meet the diverse demands of K-12 students.

EEPS Featured Research

Are Bad Schools Immortal?

By David Stuit
Thomas B. Fordham Institute

This study investigates the successes of the charter and district sectors in eliminating bad schools. It tracks low-performing schools in ten states across five years to determine how many turned around, shut down, or remained low-performing.

In all ten states, the charter sector did a slightly better job of eliminating low-performing schools, but neither sector has cause for celebration. Seventy-two percent of the original low-performing charter schools remained in operation, and remained low-performing, five years later, compared with 80 percent of district schools. Barely 1 percent of low-performing schools in either sector managed to dramatically improve their academic performance over the five-year period. In all ten states, low-performing charter schools were more likely to close than were low-performing district schools.

The State of State U.S. History Standards 2011

By Sheldon M. Stern and Jeremy M. Stern
Thomas B. Fordham Institute

While it has become clichéd to speak of a crisis in American history education, the crisis in U.S. history education is, unfortunately, entirely real. The Fordham Institute’s first review of the quality of state U.S. history standards since 2003, this study finds that a majority of states’ standards are mediocre-to-awful. The average grade across *all* states is barely a D, with ten states earning Ds and eighteen earning Fs. Just one state—South Carolina—has standards strong enough to earn a straight A. The state recently supplemented its already solid U.S. history standards with narrative “curriculum support” documents that not only outline what should be covered, but also explain the history in depth through a nuanced, sophisticated, and balanced approach. That one state can craft such a strong foundation for U.S. history leaves absolutely no excuse for the near-total lack of substance in many other states’ standards.

EEPS Publications

Elect Your Own Employer! Election Timing and Interest Group Advantage in Michigan

By Michael Hartney

It is sometimes suggested that teacher unions curry greater influence over school boards in school districts marked by low voter turnout. This paper follows Michigan’s mandated change in school-board election timing in 2004 to examine the relationship between election timing and a range of policy outcomes important to public-school teachers (such as salaries and employee health benefits). Additionally, because previous research on this subject has not dealt adequately with selection into treatment—namely, how certain districts end up adopting “on cycle” elections in the first place—this study “matches” otherwise similar school districts that differed only in their decisions on whether to move board elections to November. The study finds that, when districts moved their elections to November, subsequently elected school boards negotiated contracts that were less friendly toward teacher unions—in particular, contracts that required teachers to pay a greater share of the overall cost of their health care benefits (the average district in Michigan requires teachers to pay just 2 percent of their health care premiums).

Accountability and Teacher Practice: Investigating the Impact of a New State Test on Teacher Time Use

By Erin (Cocke) Roth

The impact of high-stakes testing on student performance is highly controversial. Indicative of this controversy is the growing body of research focused on the unintended consequences of these tests. Many argue that one of these unintended consequences is curricular narrowing. In order to investigate the effects of testing on the allocation of instructional time, this paper analyzes changing trends in teacher time use in situations where testing in new subjects has been recently added. This study uses three waves of the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) data from 1999 to 2008 to explore the impact of state testing in science and social studies on corresponding time use. Overall results show that, for states that added a test in science or social studies, time spent per week on these subject areas increased by approximately 9 percent. However, further results indicate that early state-test adopters (those who adopted a test between 2000 and 2004) experienced about a 16 percent increase in time spent on science or social studies per week, whereas the later state-test adopters (those that adopted a test after 2004) experienced no significant increase in time spent on either subject.

EEPS Updates

Daphna Bassok is working on several projects about the impact of state pre-kindergarten on the child-care sector. Using data from Florida, Oklahoma, and Georgia, she is exploring whether government preschool programs crowd out private child care. She's also examining whether the child-care sector has responded by changing its offerings (e.g. serving infants/toddlers rather than four-year-olds). Daphna also recently gave a talk at the National Center for Education Information annual conference on the future of teacher evaluation and the assessment of teacher-preparation programs.

Zoe Burkholder's book, *Color in the Classroom: How American Schools Taught Race, 1900-1954*, will be published this fall by Oxford University Press. This study is the first historical analysis of American K-12 schools as powerful, yet contested, sites of racialization. Zoe's next project investigates the history of conservative teachers in the United States from 1939 to the present.

Matt Chingos is doing a post-doc through the Harvard Kennedy School this academic year, and recently started working as a Fellow in the Brown Center on Education Policy at the Brookings Institution. He plans to move to D.C. in August to work at Brookings full-time.

In the fall, **Diana D'Amico** will begin a tenure-track position in the College of Education and Human Development at George Mason University. She'll be housed in the Education Leadership Program and will work primarily with the college's doctoral students. She will teach courses that examine the history of education, social and political forces in and around education, and research methods. She is currently completing an essay that investigates the impact of regulation and market forces on teacher education.

Elon Dancy recently published an article in the *Journal of Negro Education*. The paper explored how the collegiate experiences of African American males proffer change in academic and institutional policy. In addition, three books on similar topics which expand this conversation will be released this year. Elon recently

served on the AERA-Division J (postsecondary education) Program Committee and was also selected Senior Editor of the *College Student Affairs Journal*.

In collaboration with Thomas Hehir and Associates, **Todd Grindal** recently completed a review of special-education programs in Houston. Among the findings: African American students with learning disabilities were more likely to sit for modified assessments than similar non-African American students. He is currently conducting a similar analysis in Massachusetts. He also presented two papers at the April meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development. The first showed that students in school-based preschool programs demonstrated greater gains than students in non-school-based programs. The second paper examined relationships between family support services and pre-academic and cognitive development of children who enrolled in preschool programs.

Jason Grissom is currently focused on three main areas of work: First, he and Susanna Loeb are in the midst of a series of papers on principal effectiveness in four urban districts. Second, he and a number of co-authors are researching the labor market for school administrators using two decades of data from Missouri. Third, he's continuing to write on school board decision-making and how school boards affect district outcomes. This summer he'll be moving to Nashville, TN, where he will join the faculty at Vanderbilt University.

Mike Hansen presented recent research on empirically identifying turnaround schools at the Association for Education Finance and Policy conference in Seattle in March. He is also co-PI on a research grant that was recently awarded from IES, using longitudinal teacher data to investigate schools' responses to incentives, including teaching to the test.

In April, **Michael Hartney** attended the Midwest Political Science Association Meeting and presented research on the relationship between school-board election timing and teacher-union interest-group advantage. He is currently finishing up his dissertation proposal and planning

for a new political science course that he will teach next fall, entitled "Democracy and Our Schools." In addition, Michael is collaborating with the Michigan Association of School Boards to conduct a survey of Michigan board members to better understand the conditions under which board members are more or less responsive to constituent opinions about school reform.

Julia Kaufman co-wrote a paper presented at the American Educational Research Association annual conference in April on the relationship between teachers' use of mathematics curriculum and the quality of their instruction. She also co-led a symposium at the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics annual conference on how research can inform future state and district algebra policies. Her work on the effectiveness of online peer review for student writing has also been published this month in *Instructional Science*.

Cory Koedel's most-recent paper, "Does Student Sorting Invalidate Value-Added Models of Teacher Effectiveness? An Extended Analysis of the Rothstein Critique" (with Julian R. Betts), was recently published in *Education Finance and Policy*. His current projects examine how teacher pension systems affect labor markets for teachers and principals, whether teacher-training programs affect teaching performance, and how different mathematics curricula in elementary schools affect student achievement.

Victoria Marks has been invited to present a paper to the Third Annual Language, Education, and Diversity Conference, which will be in Auckland, New Zealand in November. Her paper examines the correlation between mathematics achievement and language for native English speakers; data suggest that, among native English speakers, language development is an important component in mathematics achievement.

Ashlyn Nelson is one of a team of principal investigators on a research project examining the effects of housing instability on children's educational outcomes. Specifically, they are investigating whether children experience adverse education outcomes (e.g., lower learning gains,

EEPS Updates, cont'd

adverse disciplinary events, and increased absences) following a residential displacement due to foreclosure. They recently received a three-year grant from the MacArthur Foundation for this study, and Ashlyn is presenting preliminary results this month at the Federal Reserve Research Conference.

In December, **Jonna Perrillo** signed a contract with the University of Chicago Press for her upcoming book, *Uncivil Rights: Teachers, Professionalism, and Civil Rights from the Great Depression to No Child Left Behind*. *Uncivil Rights* traces the relationship between unionized teachers and black city residents in New York from 1930 to the present day; it argues that the city's three teacher unions were both indebted to and often conflicted with the black civil rights movement in their own successful development. In showing how teachers adapted black civil rights rhetoric

to a professional movement for greater authority in the classroom and the education system, this book addresses and historically contextualizes many of the most important issues in today's education landscape, including teacher quality, teacher placements, school equity, and the achievement gap.

Karen Rambo will graduate with a Ph.D. in Measurement, Evaluation, and Assessment in Educational Psychology this May. She recently accepted a position at Colorado State University as an assistant professor in research and assessment in the College of Applied Human Sciences. She will continue her work analyzing student growth and will contribute to research on teacher effectiveness. Karen will defend her dissertation, titled "How much do schools matter? Using summer growth patterns to assess the effectiveness of schools for gifted and high achiev-

ing students," in May. In it, she finds that, while average student reading achievement grows quickly during the school year and flattens over the summer, high-achieving students maintain a slow, stable trajectory year round. Patterns were similar in mathematics.

Erin (Cocke) Roth recently presented two papers from her dissertation at the Society for Research in Educational Effectiveness Conference in D.C. and at the Association for Education Finance and Policy in Seattle. Erin, Jack Buckley, and Marc Scott are in the process of submitting the latter of these two papers, on state testing and teacher time use, for publication. She also recently accepted an associate research scientist position with the National Center for Education Statistics and will begin work in June. She will be working with the both the International Activities Program and the Annual Reports team.

EEPS Publications

Do Teachers' Union Contracts Restrict Districts' Abilities to Meet Accountability Goals? The Relationship between Teachers' Union Contracts and District Performance under the No Child Left Behind Act

By Katharine Strunk and Andrew McEachin

Strunk and McEachin examine how the collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) negotiated between teachers' unions and districts is associated with schools' and districts' performance under accountability pressures in California. The authors find that CBA restrictiveness is associated with the increased likelihood that districts will be in Program Improvement (PI) and at higher levels of PI, and with lower school- and district-level proficiency and graduation rates (the analysis could show only correlation, not causation). They also show that strong contract schools and districts that have higher proportions of minority, low-income, and low-achieving students are even less likely to meet performance targets and have even lower proficiency rates.

Triangulating Principal Effectiveness: How Perspectives of Parents, Teachers, and Assistant Principals Identify the Central Importance of Managerial Skills

By Jason Grissom and Susanna Loeb

In this paper, the authors draw on an assessment administered to all principals in Miami-Dade County Public Schools that rates their competency on forty-two different administrator skill dimensions. Analysis of principals' responses identifies several distinct skill areas (e.g., internal relations, instruction). But when these areas are correlated with school and student outcomes—including test score gains, teacher satisfaction, and parent climate surveys—only one area consistently predicted higher performance: "traditional" organizational management competencies, such as skills in hiring and budgeting. Results were similar for assistant principals. Findings suggest that organizational management competencies should be a greater focus of administrator selection and development.

Is it a Bad Class? Assessing the Long-term Stability of Estimated Teacher Performance

By Mike Hansen and Dan Goldhaber

This paper reports on work estimating the stability of value-added estimates of teacher effects, an important area of investigation given public interest in workforce policies that implicitly assume effectiveness is a stable attribute within teachers. The results strongly reject the hypothesis that true teacher effectiveness is perfectly stable within teachers over long periods of time, but the estimated stability is consistent with performance measures from other occupations. The ability of measured performance in one period to predict measured performance in future periods decreases with longer gaps between the two periods. However, estimates suggest that a component of performance appears to persist within teachers, even over a ten-year panel. Finally, we find that little of the changes in teacher effectiveness estimates within teachers can be explained by observable characteristics.

EEPS Updates, cont'd

Carolyn Sattin-Bajaj recently completed her dissertation entitled, “Chronicle of a Choice Foretold: The High School Choice Experiences of Immigrant and Nativeborn Youth and Their Families in Comparative Perspective,” and is set to defend in late spring of 2011. The mixed-methods study examined how low-income first and second generation children of Latin American and Asian immigrants, African American students, and their parents negotiated New York City’s mandatory high school application process, gathered information about schools, and made decisions. Early findings appear as a chapter in *School Choice and School Improvement: Research in State, District, and Community Contexts* published in 2011 by Harvard Education Press.

Arnold Shober is completing his textbook, *Out of Many, One? The Democratic Dilemma of American Education*, to be published in 2012. He also had his paper, “Attracting Capital: Magnets, Charters, and School Referendum Success,” accepted for publication in the *Journal of School Choice Research*. The paper shows a strong positive association with the number of choice schools in a district and referenda success in CA, CO, WI, and MN and suggests that choice schools are an indication of a responsive local district.

Additional current projects include 1) political dimensions of teacher protest activity in WI, and 2) growing gubernatorial influence in state education policy and its effect on effective, research-based bureaucracy.

Katharine Strunk was recently selected as a National Academy of Education/Spencer Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow. In addition, she has an in-press article in the *American Education Research Journal*, entitled “Do Teachers’ Union Contracts Restrict Districts’ Abilities to Meet Accountability Goals? The Relationship between Teachers’ Union Contracts and District Performance under the No Child Left Behind Act,” that’s been released online. She also recently published an article in the *Journal of Education Finance*, entitled “Differentiated Compensation: How California School Districts Use Economic Incentives to Target Teachers.”

David Stuit is entering the third year of a study of Catholic school effectiveness for the Walton Family Foundation. He’s also investigating the promise and pitfalls of rural charter schools for the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. He continues to work with his colleagues at Basis to provide technical assistance to states and school districts on teacher compen-

sation and evaluation. Basis is currently helping the Arizona Department of Education to design and test its value-added model. On the “academic” front, David recently had a paper on teacher turnover in charter schools accepted for publication in the *Economics of Education Review*. He’s also co-editing a special issue of the *Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk* (JESPAR) that focuses on challenges of turning around failing schools (fellow EEPS Michael Hansen has agreed to contribute).

Jennifer Wallner is working on a co-authored piece with Paul Manna on the federal role in educational accountability. They will be presenting the paper at a conference convened by AEI in May. Based on an appraisal of NCLB implementation, the paper asks: What can federal policymakers reasonably hope to accomplish when they attempt to cultivate systems that promote educational accountability? They conclude that Washington policymakers face increasingly difficult challenges as their goals move from fostering the creation of policy outputs at sub-national levels, to producing outcomes that enhance educational opportunity, and ultimately to generating subsequent outcomes that improve educational quality.

EEPS Publications

Balancing Rigor and Equity: A Literature Review to Inform Algebra Policymaking and Research

By Julia Kaufman et al.

Advocates argue that universal access to algebra in eighth or ninth grade is a serious equity and civil rights issue. This review of studies that can inform algebra policymaking finds that—indeed—some U.S. students at similar achievement levels have inequitable access to algebra. However, when all students are mandated to take algebra in eighth or ninth grade, a much greater number—and sometimes percentage—of students also fail algebra. This and other evidence suggests that underprepared students represent the biggest challenge for universal algebra policies. Still, research to date provides almost no guidance about the necessary instructional and support scaffolds that must accompany universal algebra policies in order for those policies to lead to better student outcomes.

Chronicle of a Choice Foretold: The High School Choice Experiences of Immigrant and Native-born Youth and Their Families in Comparative Perspective

By Carolyn-Sattin Bajaj

This dissertation examines how low-income first and second generation children of Latin American and Asian immigrants, African American students, and their parents, negotiated New York City’s mandatory high school choice process. Findings show that children of low-income immigrant mothers from Latin America relied on fewer information sources and received less home-based support in making school selections than their African-American and Asian-origin peers. Consequently, the results indicate that the expectations of extensive parental involvement in high school choice embedded in district policy serve to disadvantage low-income children of Latin American immigrants. The findings call into question the possibility of achieving equitable access to high-quality education in New York City through the current school-choice policy given the weak communications strategy, limited outreach, and negligible direct support provided to families making school-choice decisions.



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