

# Peeps from EEPS

American Enterprise Institute  
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## Save the Date!

The next—and final—  
EEPS event for Cohort  
2 will take place on  
January 13-14, 2013 in  
Washington, D.C.

### 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.

### Greetings EEPS,

Thanksgiving break is almost here! (Which will give you lots of extra time to read about your cohort's impressive achievements.)

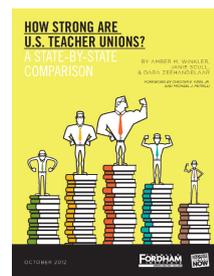
Books, articles, new jobs, marriages—you've been a very busy group. In the pages that follow, you'll read a short description of what everyone's been up to and their current and upcoming research. We've included some of what we've been up to as well, as well as some events you may be interested in. (*Note:* If you'd like to be more involved with our work or broaden the audience for your research, you can submit studies to Fordham's weekly *Gadfly* newsletter for review or author a guest editorial—just email [thegadfly@edexcellence.net](mailto:thegadfly@edexcellence.net) with your submissions. And if you'd like to pitch an idea for a working paper or Education Outlook piece through AEI, please contact Taryn Hochleitner.)

Feel free to contact either Matt ([mrichmond@edexcellence.net](mailto:mrichmond@edexcellence.net)) or Taryn ([taryn.hochleitner@aei.org](mailto:taryn.hochleitner@aei.org)) with any questions or compliments. We look forward to seeing you in January!

## New from AEI and Fordham

### How Strong are U.S. Teacher Unions? A state-by-state comparison

by Amber M. Winkler, Janie Scull, and Dara Zeehandelaar



This timely study represents the most comprehensive analysis of American teacher unions' strength ever conducted, ranking all fifty states and the District of Columbia according to the power and influence of their state-level unions. It analyzes factors such as union membership and revenue, state bargaining laws, and campaign contributions, measures the alignment between specific state policies and traditional union interests, and leverages a unique stakeholder survey.

### Implementing Indiana's "Putting Students First" Agenda: Early lessons and potential futures

by Paul Manna, Keenan Kelley, and Frederick M. Hess



In a newly released study, authors Paul Manna, Keenan Kelley, and Frederick M. Hess assess Indiana's 2011 "Putting Students First" education-reform law, a first-of-its-kind large-scale reform package that includes school-choice, teacher-evaluation and collective-bargaining reforms, and that serves as a model for other states. Indiana's experience shows that while state-level leadership is necessary, local officials must ultimately be the ones to implement changes. Unless attitudes and actions shift at the local level, education reform will remain an idea rather than a reality.

## EEPS Updates

### Angela Boatman

Angela Boatman completed her doctoral degree in May from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and is currently working as a postdoctoral scholar at the Center for Education Policy Analysis at Stanford University. She is involved with several state- and institution-level studies aimed at better understanding the effects of postsecondary remedial and developmental courses on student outcomes, as well as the effects of the placement exams commonly used to assign students to such courses. She will present findings from this research, which supports structural and curricular redesign efforts as one solution toward improving remedial education, at the annual APPAM and ASHE conferences in November.

### Jessica Boccardo

Jessica Boccardo is in the final year of her Ph.D. in Public Policy. She works at the Institute of Education and Social Policy at NYU and has co-authored two papers with Amy Ellen Schwartz, Leanna Stiefel, and Matt Wiswall focusing on the effect of different school types on academic and non-academic outcomes in NYC. She is currently focusing her research on students' in-school experiences, moving beyond academic outcomes. The first paper of her dissertation explores whether small schools, a crucial component of recent reforms to improve school quality in the US, foster a more positive learning environment in NYC. A second paper uses a nationally representative sample of Mexican students and schools to further explore this question. The third paper combines data on academic outcomes for NYC students with data on fitness and obesity to better understand the link between academic and non-academic skills, exploring the ways in which academic and fitness/obesity outputs

are formed and how they affect each other. By honing in on what is going on inside high schools, she hopes policymakers will be better equipped to understand the mechanisms driving student outcomes and behavior.

### Deven Carlson

Deven has had four main projects as of late. First, he's been working with co-authors to develop papers based on their recent evaluation of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. The first of these papers is forthcoming in *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. Second, he's been working on a paper about challenges and opportunities that policymakers are likely to confront as they work to integrate the Common Core State Standards with existing state accountability systems. This paper will be part of AEI's project titled *Common Core Meets the Reform Agenda*. He's also been working on a series of papers analyzing Colorado's inter-district open-enrollment program. Finally, he's been working on a project assessing the operations and effects of bilingual instruction programs, relative to the more traditional ESL approach.

### Sarah Cohodes

Sarah is in her second year at Harvard, working on classes and developing new research ideas. She recently enjoyed running into many of her fellow EEPS at APPAM in November, where she presented work on charter schools and test prep.

### Nate Jensen

Over the past six months, much of Nate's work has focused on teacher evaluation—specifically, on how test scores can and should be used in making determinations of a teacher's effectiveness. He has been working closely with schools in New York, Illinois, Rhode Island, and

Connecticut, providing guidance on ways in which their tests (Northwest Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic Progress) should and should not be used, including extensive work with the Value-Added Research Center (VARC) devising state-wide value-added solutions for schools who want to use the data for this purpose. He has also begun preliminary work on identifying new validity metrics that districts can use to understand if students are giving appropriate effort on the assessments, to ensure that evaluations based on student test scores accurately reflect the impact their teachers have had on student learning.

### Ashley Jochim

Ashley Jochim accepted a staff position at the Center on Reinventing Public Education as a Research Analyst and is defending her dissertation in early November. In collaboration with Patrick Murphy and Monica Oujidani, she is in the final stages of a project considering school-improvement strategies in state education agencies. In partnership with Edvance, the Academic Development Institute, and her colleagues at CRPE, she helped secure one of eight state content centers focused on building state capacity and productivity in education. She recently initiated several projects, including one on the political challenges associated with Common Core implementation—which will be presented at a private conference hosted by AEI in March 2013—and a second with Paul Hill on redesigning district central offices.

### Michael Jones

This fall, Michael Jones began work at the University of Cincinnati as a Research Assistant Professor and will be presenting work on teacher performance-pay incentives at the

APPAM conference. In the spring, he will present work on teacher tenure at the AERA annual conference. As a member of UC's Economics Center, he is the principal investigator on a project to evaluate the effectiveness of a shared-services pilot program for local school districts' teacher-evaluation services. He is also working with local school districts to evaluate teacher and staff compensation.

#### **Matt Kraft**

Matt Kraft has worked to advance several research projects of late. He recently completed collecting data on a randomized trial evaluating the effect of teacher-parent communication on student achievement. This study compares the relative effectiveness of providing positive feedback to parents about what is going well versus feedback on what students need to do better. Along with collaborators, he also completed a study that provides some of the first evidence of the negative effect on student achievement of hiring teachers after the start of the school year. The study shows that students who are taught by late-hired teachers score lower on standardized achievement tests in both math and reading.

#### **Andrew McEachin**

Andrew recently moved to Charlottesville, VA, where he joined the Curry School of Education's Center for Education Policy and Workforce Competitiveness group as an IES Postdoctoral Fellow. In addition, he co-authored an in-press article in the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* with former EEPS Dr. Katharine Strunk, entitled "The use and efficacy of capacity-building assistance for low-performing districts: The case of California's district assistance intervention teams." He also recently published an article in *Educational Researcher* with current

EEPS Dr. Morgan Polikoff, entitled "We are the 5%: Which schools would be held accountable under a proposed revision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act?"

#### **Mike McShane**

Mike McShane's first book, *President Obama and Education Reform: The Personal and the Political* (co-authored with Bob Maranto), was released by Palgrave MacMillan in September. Around that same time, he authored a synthesis of the book's major arguments that was released through AEI, called *Turning the Tides, President Obama and Education Reform*. Patrick Wolf and Mike recently had a paper (a cost-benefit analysis of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program) accepted for publication in a future edition of *Education Finance and Policy*. He also had several opinion pieces published in outlets ranging from the *National Review Online* to the *Huffington Post* and appeared on both Fox and Friends and PBS Newshour.

#### **Eric Parsons**

In addition to helping produce value-added estimates for the state

of Missouri's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Kansas City Missouri School District, Eric Parsons has been researching the performance of high-achieving Missouri students as they progress from third through eighth grade and into high school. In particular, this line of research is focused on the student and school characteristics that predict declining student performance over time, as well as factors that predict the grade in which Algebra I is taken. Eric is also the co-author of two recent CALDER working papers (on the variation in effectiveness of teacher-preparation programs and a comparison of student-growth models) that have received significant interest from the education-research community, including mentions in several prominent edu-blogs. Both papers are currently under review for publication.

#### **Morgan Polikoff**

Morgan Polikoff's work currently focuses on three strands: analyzing state Elementary and Secondary Education Act waiver applications and implementation; preparing a report

## Upcoming Events

### For-profits and Federal Education Policy

November 26th, 2012 10:00 am - 11:30 am

AEI will host a panel on for-profits and federal education policy featuring Stacey Childress of the Gates Foundation and Michael B. Horn of Innosight Institute

### Why fixing education policy isn't enough: The "culture of can't" in K-12

January 15th, 2013 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm

Rick Hess will deliver one of AEI's Bradley Lectures exploring the "culture of can't" in K-12 education based on major themes in his forthcoming book *Cage-Busting Leadership*

\*\*\*AEI and Fordham events available to watch live online (check websites for details)

for AEI on the intersection of the Common Core State Standards and teacher-quality reforms; and examining data from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Measures of Effective Teaching study. Morgan was named to the editorial board of Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, and he recently received a small grant from NIH to explore special-education instruction and outcomes using the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten cohort data. Since the last meeting, he also bought a house in LA and tied the knot. (Congratulations!)

### **Andrew Saultz**

Andrew Saultz is currently working on three projects related to school-quality data and the public. First, he is working with Rebecca Jacobsen and Jeff Snyder on analyzing parent satisfaction and school report card data in NYC. Second, he is continuing to study how the format of school report card data influences parent satisfaction by using national data from a TESS experiment. He is also analyzing how changes to school report cards in Kentucky are being explained to the public by the government and non-profit groups. Finally, he is collecting data for his dissertation, which analyzes the decision by state policymakers to apply for Race to the Top.

### **Eric Taylor**

In November, Eric Taylor will present ongoing work on the long(er) run effects of math remediation in middle school at APPAM and recent work on the effect of evaluations on subsequent teacher performance at Ohio's Annual Education Conference. The latter paper, co-authored with John Tyler, will be published in December's issue of the *American Economic Review*. Eric is also currently working with Eric Bettinger

and Susanna Loeb on measuring professor performance and instructional practices in online college courses.

(*Note:* Eric and Jon Valant congratulate fellow EEPS Angela Boatman on her recent, substantial institutional upgrade from Harvard to Stanford.)

### **Chris Torres**

Chris recently transitioned to a new role at Relay GSE. He is now working on the Research Team, assisting with developing the research agenda.

### **Jon Valant**

Jon Valant has finalized his dissertation chapter topics and continues to work on those chapters. His dissertation examines which individuals, groups, and institutions have power in U.S. educational policymaking, what defines their values and interests, and how that combination translates to real-world education policies and outcomes. He is currently focused on a paper that uses an assortment of regression-discontinuity designs to assess the relationships between which political party controls the governorships and majorities in state legislative houses and the policy outputs, social outcomes, and political agendas in those states. Aside from his dissertation, Jon is examining how urban charter-school enrollment changes as schools grow older, more successful, and better known in their communities. He expects to have that paper completed by the end of the year. He is also continuing his work on the American public's attitudes about educational equity and the role of information provision in school-choice programs.

### **Jennie Weiner**

Jennie Weiner is currently a post-doctoral associate at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. In this capacity, she is working on two main

projects. The first is focused on TFA's role as an entrepreneurial spawner in the education sector. Specifically, the research looks at the role of TFA in developing career networks among alumni and whether these networks serve to promote entrepreneurship. The second project extends existing work examining teacher professionalism in NYC and investigates the degree to which a principal facilitating a culture of psychological safety and accountability impacts student outcomes. She is also working as a consultant to the Rhode Island Department of Education to support implementation of their ESEA waiver.

### **Rebecca Zumeta**

Working with colleagues and senior advisors to the National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII), Rebecca is helping to plan and produce a special issue of *Teaching Exceptional Children* on delivery of intensive interventions in the academics and behavior of students with disabilities. The issue will include data-based approaches to designing intensive intervention, case studies, discussion of implementation considerations, and a description of how the concept of intensive intervention fits within the current education-policy landscape. In addition, Rebecca will lead a webinar in November on how to design and implement intensive intervention using data-based individualization, which will be available live nationally and for download at [www.intensiveintervention.org](http://www.intensiveintervention.org). Rebecca has also edited and overseen the production of over thirty-five training modules, intervention briefs, webinars, and reports on the delivery and evaluation of tiered interventions in reading and math through her work with the National Center on Response to Intervention in the past year. These materials are free and available to the public at [www.rti4success.org](http://www.rti4success.org).

## Research! Abstracts! Oh My!

### **The Association of State Policy Attributes with Teachers' Instructional Alignment**

*Morgan Polikoff*

States vary greatly in their implementation of standards-based accountability under No Child Left Behind, yet little evidence is available to guide policymakers on what attributes of state policy advance more tightly aligned instruction. This study uses survey data and content analyses from the Surveys of Enacted Curriculum to describe elements of state policy that are associated with tighter alignment between teacher-reported instruction and state standards and assessments. The author reports substantial variation on policy attributes across states, with increasing use of power (rewards and sanctions) and low overall consistency between standards and assessments. Several of the policy attributes are related to instructional alignment, with the strongest fit in mathematics.

### **Life After Vouchers: What Happens to Students Who Leave Private Schools for the Traditional Public Sector?**

*Deven Carlson, Joshua Cowen, and David Fleming*

Few school choice evaluations consider students who leave such programs, and fewer still consider the effects of leaving these programs as policy-relevant outcomes. Using a representative sample of students from the citywide voucher program in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, we analyze more than 1,000 students who leave the program during a 4-year period. We show that low-performing voucher students tend to move from the voucher sector into lower performing and less-effective public schools than the typical public school student attends, whereas high-performing students transfer to better public schools. In general, transferring students realize substantial achievement gains after moving to the public sector; these results are robust to multiple analytical approaches. This evidence has important implications for school choice policy and research.

### **Investigating Instructional Leadership Teams in Action**

*Jennie Weiner*

To promote distributed leadership, many schools have introduced Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) which are tasked with identifying and implementing instructional reform measures. However, despite the increasing presence of ILTs, there is to date little research on the factors that affect their processes and approaches to implementing strategy. This study addresses this gap and examines ILTs in four in-district charter schools in a large Northeastern city. It finds that, despite ILT members' official designation as leaders, they were unable to obtain the authority necessary to make decisions that would impact the instruction. This outcome resulted from three interrelated factors: (1) an adherence among ILT members to a hierarchical model of leadership by the principal, (2) the hiring process and criteria used to identify ILT members, and (3) the influence of teaching's traditional professional norms of autonomy and egalitarianism. Therefore, while the ILTs provided a forum for discussion and potentially for reform, team members seemed unable to capitalize on this possibility and make decisions that positively impact teacher instructional practice.

### **The Polls-trends: Who Should Control Education?**

*Andrew Saultz and R. Jacobson*

By examining public opinion from the 1970s to 2010, we find that unlike some policy advocates who see local control of education as obsolete, the public often expresses strong support for local control. Additionally, the public recognizes that the state and federal government can play an important role in education. We find increased support for state and federal involvement when issues of equity are invoked in question wording.

## Get to Know Cohort 1

### **The Effect of Evaluation on Teacher Performance**

*Eric Taylor and John Tyler*

Teacher-performance evaluation has become a dominant theme in school-reform efforts. Yet whether evaluation changes the performance of teachers, the focus of this paper, is unknown. Instead, evaluation has largely been studied as an input to selective dismissal decisions. We study mid-career teachers for whom we observe an objective measure of productivity—value-added to student achievement—before, during, and after evaluation. We find teachers are more productive in post-evaluation years, with the largest improvements among teachers performing relatively poorly ex-ante. The results suggest teachers can gain information from evaluation and subsequently develop new skills, increase long-run effort, or both.

### **We are the 5%: Which Schools Would be Held Accountable Under a Proposed Revision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act?**

*Andrew McEachin and Morgan Polikoff*

This article uses data from California to analyze the results of the proposed accountability system in the Senate's Harkin-Enzi draft Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization. The authors analyze existing statewide school-level data from California, applying the accountability criteria proposed in the draft law. Comparing the proposed system to the No Child Left Behind Act's Adequate Yearly Progress provisions, they draw conclusions about the stability of the proposed identification schemes and the types of schools likely to be identified. They conclude with several policy recommendations that could be easily incorporated into the law based on their analysis and the existing literature.

### **First Degree Earns: The Impact of College Quality on College Completion Rates**

*Sarah Cohodes and Joshua Goodman*

We use a Massachusetts merit aid program to provide the first clear causal evidence on the impact of college quality on students' post-secondary enrollment decisions and rates of degree completion, where college quality is defined by a variety of measures including on-time graduation rates. High school students with test scores above multiple thresholds were granted tuition waivers at in-state public colleges of lower quality than the average alternative available to such students. A binding score regression-discontinuity design comparing students just above and below these thresholds yields two main findings. First, students are remarkably willing to forgo college quality for relatively small amounts of money. Second, choosing a lower-quality college significantly lowers on-time completion rates, a result driven by high-skilled students who would otherwise have attended higher-quality colleges. For the marginal student, enrolling at an in-state public college

In the future, we'll organize an event introducing the cohorts, providing a great opportunity for networking and collaboration. Until then, you can find the affiliation and research interests of some of our Cohort 1 EEPs below. Be sure to check out the full list on [www.edexcellence.net](http://www.edexcellence.net) (and say hello at conferences!).

#### **Matt Chingos**

*Fellow - Brown Center, Brookings*  
Digital learning, costs of assessment systems, district leadership

#### **Todd Grindal**

*PhD Candidate - Harvard*  
Special education, early care

#### **Jason Grissom**

*Assistant Professor - Vanderbilt*  
Principal effectiveness, leadership mobility, HR decisions in schools

#### **Julia Kaufman**

*Consultant - Pitt, CMU, RAND*  
Teacher survey methodology, online learning

#### **Michael Hansen**

*Senior Researcher - AIR*  
Teacher quality/evaluation, school turnaround, program evals

#### **Michael Hartney**

*PhD Candidate - Notre Dame*  
Teacher unions, teacher labor markets, school governance

#### **Karen Rambo-Hernandez**

*Assistant Professor - CSU*  
Assessments, statistical modeling of longitudinal data

#### **Carolyn Sattin-Bajaj**

*Assistant Professor - Seton Hall*  
Latin immigrant youth, school choice, college access

lowered the probability of graduating on time by more than 40%. The low completion rates of scholarship users imply the program had little impact on the in-state production of college degrees. More broadly, these results suggest that the critically important task of improving college quality requires steps beyond merely changing the composition of the student body.

### **Teacher Preparation Programs and Teacher Quality: Are There Real Differences Across Programs?**

*Cory Koedel, Eric Parsons, Michael Podgursky, and Mark Ehlert*

We compare teacher-preparation programs in Missouri based on the effectiveness of their graduates in the classroom. The differences in effectiveness between teachers from different preparation programs are very small. In fact, virtually all of the variation in teacher effectiveness comes from within-program differences between teachers. Prior research has overstated differences in teacher performance across preparation programs for several reasons, most notably because some sampling variability in the data has been incorrectly attributed to the preparation programs.

### **Evaluating Institutional Efforts to Streamline Postsecondary Remediation: The Causal Effects of the Tennessee Developmental Course Redesign Initiative on Early Student Academic Success**

*Angela Boatman*

Exploiting a statewide cutoff point on the placement examination used to assign students to remedial courses in Tennessee, this study employs a regression-discontinuity research design to provide causal estimates of the effects on student outcomes of recently redesigned remedial courses at three Tennessee colleges. Moreover, using data on student outcomes prior to the course redesigns, the study also tests whether the redesigned remedial programs were more effective in preparing students for success in postsecondary education than the remedial programs they replaced. The findings indicate that among students on the margins of the cutoff score, the effects of enrollment in developmental mathematics were positive and statistically significant on early student persistence as well as on the number of credits attempted but not completed in the first semester. The study also finds that students who were exposed to redesigned developmental math courses had more positive outcomes than did their peers in non-redesign institutions during the same period and also when compared with students who were exposed to the previous version of traditional remediation within their institution in prior years. Students appear to have benefited from redesigned courses at two of the three institutions. The results of this analysis provide insight into the extent to which the particular instruction and delivery methods of remedial courses affect subsequent student academic outcomes, thus informing administrators and policymakers as to how best to help underprepared students.

### **How Context Matters in High-Need Schools: The Effects of Teachers' Working Conditions on Their Professional Satisfaction and Their Students' Achievement**

*Susan Moore Johnson, Matthew A. Kraft, and John P. Papay*

Retaining effective teachers is a particular challenge for schools that serve high proportions of low-income and minority students. Although some interpret the high turnover rates at these schools as evidence of teachers' discontent with their students, we provide evidence that teachers choose to leave schools with poor work environments, and that these conditions are most common in schools that minority and low-income students typically attend. We find that measures of the school environment explain away much of the apparent relationship between teacher satisfaction and student demographic characteristics. Teachers are more satisfied and plan to stay longer in schools that have a positive work context, independent of the school's student demographic characteristics. More importantly, we find that favorable conditions of work predict higher rates of student academic growth, even when we compare schools serving demographically similar groups of students.



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