

The University of Georgia Education Policy and Evaluation Center

in conjunction with The Georgia Assessment Center,
The Learning and Performance Support Laboratory, and
The Center for Latino Achievement and Success in Education



Present a College of Education Centennial Event:

Changing Horses or Paddling Harder? Reconsidering the State/Federal Relationship in Education Policy

2009 Conference Panel Summaries

The Georgia Education Policy and Evaluation Center held its second annual spring conference on May 1, 2009. Titled *Changing Horses or Paddling Harder? Reconsidering the State/Federal Relationship in Education Policy*, the conference featured faculty members' research in the areas of governmental relations, federal legislation, educational policy design, and resource allocation. Presenters were assembled into four panels that included professors and students from various departments within the University of Georgia's College of Education as well as visiting professors from other universities. Attendees included various member of the university community and some state-level policy makers.

Governmental Relations: Congress and the New Administration

Panelists:

- Kimberly Robinson, Emory University
- Elizabeth DeBray-Pelot, Associate Director, Georgia Education Policy and Evaluation Center

Following a welcome from Dean Horne, EPEC Associate Director for Policy, Dr. Elizabeth DeBray-Pelot and Emory University Law School Professor, Kimberly Robinson began the first session of the conference with a discussion of the federal policy context; specifically, presenters addressed issues of federalism, equal opportunity, and the role of Congress and the new administration in educational policy making.

Critical Perspectives on No Child Left Behind

Moderator: Melissa Freeman, Assistant Professor, University of Georgia, Lifelong Education, Administration and Policy

Panelists:

- William Wraga, University of Georgia
- Janna Dresden, University of Georgia
- Tracie Costantino, University of Georgia

Respondent: Jori Hall, Assistant Professor, University of Georgia, Lifelong Education, Administration and Policy

As a follow-up to the introduction, the second panel of presenters provided critical perspectives on federal legislation in general, and on No Child Left Behind in particular. Dr. William Wraga, UGA, discussed the need to incentivize local problem-solving in K-12 education, and he cited research suggesting that top-down approaches to educational reform have been largely ineffective and have resulted in a significant narrowing of curriculum. This idea was further developed by Dr. Janna Dresden and Dr. Tracie Costantino of the Lamar Dodd College of Art, whose presentations highlighted the negative impact of continual high-stakes assessments on students. Dresden noted that policies governing test administration often negatively impact the depth and breadth of curriculum offered, and Costantino emphasized the potential for marginalization of important “non-academic” subjects such as art and music.

Is Federal Legislation Adequately Addressing the Needs of all Subgroups?

Moderator: Max Skidmore, Academic Professional, University of Georgia Lifelong Education, Administration and Policy

Panelists:

- Jennifer Leahy, University of Georgia
- Rebecca Callahan, University of Georgia
- Jack Parish, University of Georgia

Respondent: Jack Parish, Lecturer, University of Georgia, Lifelong Education, Administration and Policy

The third panel assessed the degree to which federal legislation is adequately addressing the needs of all subgroups to promote educational opportunity. LEAP doctoral student Jennifer Leahy discussed testing and its consequences for high school graduation rates, while Dr. Rebecca Callahan and Dr. Jack Parish focused on the federal requirements pertaining to English language learners and students with disabilities.

Policy Design and Resource Allocation

Moderator: Bonnie Stewart, Advanced Doctoral Student, University of Georgia, Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy

Panelists:

- Eric Houck, University of Georgia
- Sheneka Williams, University of Georgia
- Ain Grooms & Robert Gaines, University of Georgia

Respondent: Catherine Sielke, Associate Professor, University of Georgia, Lifelong Education, Administration and Policy

The final panel of presenters focused on policy design and resource allocation. Dr. Eric Houck, UGA, discussed the possibility of creating an equitable distribution of teachers within the state of Georgia through a creative repurposing of Title II funds that would better address the intradistrict funding inequities that exist within and across the state. The focus on federal monies continued as Dr. Sheneka Williams, UGA, explained the need for the federal government to more rigorously evaluate the use of supplemental educational services in the Title I program. LEAP doctoral students Ain Grooms and Robert Gaines concluded the panel discussion with their ideas on tying federal money to local building projects and school renovations.

Education Policy in Transition: The White Papers Project of the National Academies

Keynote Presentation:

- Jeremy Kilpatrick, University of Georgia

Regents Professor Dr. Jeremy Kilpatrick delivered the luncheon address, Education Policy in Transition: The “White Papers” Project of the National Academies. Kilpatrick spoke about the National Academy of Education’s effort to inform federal education policy through a recently commissioned set of papers by academic experts, and discussed his own co-authored paper on mathematics and science standards.



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Papers from the conference are being edited and will appear in forthcoming EPEC publications.