



EPEC Update

Education Policy and Evaluation Center
University of Georgia

Impacting education
policy and improving
the quality of
education through
research and
evaluation

October 15, 2007

Volume 1, Issue 2

NSF Presentation on Educational Research

Dr. Paola Sztajn, Associate Professor in Mathematics Education and currently serving as Program Director at National Science Foundation (NSF), will make a presentation on **Educational Research at the NSF**. The presentation will be held November 2, 9:30—11:30 a.m., in Room 418 Aderhold Hall.

Topics:

- Overview of the Directorate for Education and Human Resources at the NSF
- Areas of research and scholarship within the Division of Research on Learning in Formal and Informal Sciences (DRL) at NSF
- Funding priorities for DRL
- Application procedures for submitting proposals

Time will be available to discuss specific areas of research that faculty may want to review with Dr. Sztajn.

Policy Update

Dr. Elizabeth DeBray-Pelot attended a Policy Institute sponsored by Voices for Georgia's Children in Atlanta on September 26th. The theme of the Institute was improving state policy for adolescents. Topics addressed included graduation rates, health care, the foster care system, and the essential role of connectedness to mentors and other adults. Two papers produced for the conference by Kronley and Associates are available from the Center: [Older Adolescents in Georgia: A Compendium of Critical Facts](#), and [Data Trends on Social Outcomes for Georgia's Teens](#). Please contact Elizabeth if you would like copies.

Drs. Eric Houck, Sheneka Williams, and Elizabeth DeBray-Pelot have developed a preliminary proposal to study the initial implementation and effects of the recent Supreme Court ruling on race-based assignment in five counties in North Carolina. Their study is entitled "Response to *Meredith*: Tracking Policy Implementation and Resource Distribution across Diverse Contexts in North Carolina," and is part of a larger proposal they are developing collaboratively with researchers from University of Massachusetts-Amherst and Michigan State University.

The Policy Research Group is soliciting Working Papers from faculty members for posting on the Center website. Please contact us if you have policy-related papers that are either under review at a journal or have been presented at conferences.

Inside this issue:

Policy Impact News	2
NCLB Reauthorization	3
Task Groups Update	4
Funding Opportunities	4
About EPEC	5

Policy Impact News

From the Public Education Network (PEN) Weekly NewsBlast for Sept. 28, 2007:

PUBLIC SCHOOL PRACTICES FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND REDUCTION

Everyone agrees that students learn better if they feel safe at school. The latest issue brief from the National Center for Education Statistics examines the prevalence of formal practices within public schools that are designed to prevent or reduce school violence. The brief also describes the distribution of the practices by selected school characteristics. It doesn't appear from these findings that there are nationwide school violence prevention and reduction practices, as schools implemented a variety of different practices, with some being more commonly used than others. In fact, 59 percent of schools formally obtained parental input on policies related to school crime, and 50 percent provided parental training to deal with students' behavioral problems. Additionally, high schools were more likely than primary schools to implement safety and security procedures, while primary schools were more likely to promote training for parents to deal with behavioral problems in students. It might be worth noting that almost as many schools had some type of security officer on hand on a regular basis (45 percent) as those that provided support for parents to engage their children with behavior issues. [Click here for more...](#)

THE STATE OF AMERICAN SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENCY

More women are becoming superintendents, as women currently make up more than 20 percent of superintendents, up from 16 percent in 2000 and 6.6 percent in 1992, according to a new report released by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). Despite the increase, 29 percent of female superintendents say a glass ceiling exists that hurts their chances of being selected for the job. The report includes information on the ever-changing roles superintendents play, especially in light of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). In fact, a majority of superintendents say NCLB has had a negative impact on the nation's schools. Not surprising, given the recent education climate, superintendents experience high levels of stress. Some 60 percent of superintendents find their position very stressful and 15 percent say they experience very great stress. Still, superintendents are drawn to the vocation by a desire to help students achieve. The AASA report includes valuable information on what makes superintendents tick -- besides federal legislation. [Click here for more...](#)

From the Public Education Network (PEN) Weekly NewsBlast for Oct. 5, 2007:

STATE READING TESTS DEEMED EASIER

State designed math tests that students must take to satisfy No Child Left Behind requirements appear harder than their reading counterparts, reports Nancy Zuckerbrod of the Associated Press. The study, released by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, comes about a week after the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the gold standard in measuring student performance, found that students were improving their math skills at a better rate than reading skills. [Click here for more...](#)

HOW DO CHARTER SCHOOLS AFFECT ALL ASPECTS OF EDUCATION-

New research from the National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education at Teachers College, Columbia University went beyond test scores to incorporate longitudinal data from a large urban school district to assess how charter schools affect student discipline, attendance, and retention. Using individual fixed-effects analyses, the research suggests charter schools generate improvements in student behavior and attendance but the effect on test scores differs by subject. The research also finds little evidence that charter schools generate long-term benefits if students return to non-charters. [Click here for more...](#)

Excerpts from the PEN Weekly NewsBlast are the property of Public Education Network, <http://www.PublicEducation.org>

Study Findings....

Rural School are **MORE** likely to use dogs for random drug checks and **LESS** likely to use school uniforms, to involve parents in discipline issues, and to use random metal detector checks.

"Some 90 percent of superintendents say they are **satisfied or very satisfied** in their current position."

Percentage of women superintendents:

1992	6.6%
2000	16%
2007	20%

"State designed **math tests...appear harder** than their reading counterparts."

"Charters are effective at improving student behavior, on average, while their **impact on test scores is mixed.**"

NCLB Reauthorization

The summaries below were taken from ASCD's SmartBriefs. The full news article can be accessed by clicking on the underlined title.

[Commission Releases Final Report for NCLB Reauthorization](#), [PRNEWswire](#)

WASHINGTON, Feb. 13 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Today the Commission on No Child Left Behind released its final recommendations for the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The 75 recommendations in the report focus on making sure teachers and principals are effective, improving accountability measures, effective school improvement and student options, rigorous standards, and strengthening high schools. "We hope this report will serve as a blueprint for Congress and ...

[Invest in preschool children](#), [FORT COLLINS \(COLO.\) COLORADOAN](#)

Education Secretary Margaret Spellings faces tough opposition as she plans to expand the No Child Left Behind law on testing into high school. Every child in grades 3 through 11 will be tested on basic skills annually. Currently there is insufficient support in the House of Representatives to pass this expansion of the NCLB Act.

[NCLB Works! - New Coalition Launches Breakthrough Campaign](#), [MARKETWIRE](#)

WASHINGTON, July 18 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- A coalition of business, education, community and civil rights groups today launched a campaign -- NCLB Works! -- and released a statement of eight principles that all of the groups believe must guide the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) Act this year. The campaign will first target the House Committee on Education and Labor and the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions which are now drafting changes ...

[Education Next: NCLB Uses a Flawed Measuring Stick to Judge School Performance](#), [BUSINESS WIRE](#)

The federal law No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is using the wrong measuring stick to identify failing schools, says Harvard University's Paul E. Peterson in the new issue of Education Next. To make the law's accountability system work, he proposes two fixes ...

[ETS Poll: Public Supports NCLB Reauthorization](#), [MARKETWIRE](#)

WASHINGTON, DC -- (MARKET WIRE) -- 06/19/07 -- With a summer of congressional debate ahead over No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, a major public opinion poll from ETS shows that parents, teachers and school administrators strongly support reauthorization of the law. They also favor greater flexibility in assisting students and schools struggling to meet high standards and call for increased funding for schools failing to make adequate progress.

[School Superintendents From Across Nation Discuss No Child Left Behind Law Pending in Congress](#), [MARKETWIRE](#)

PALO ALTO, Calif., Oct. 1 /PRNewswire/ -- Thirty-five school superintendents from across the United States will discuss proposed changes to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act with leading education experts on Oct. 5-6, 2007 at the Westin Palo Alto, 675 El Camino Real in Palo Alto, across from the Stanford University campus.

ASCD's SmartBriefs

Sign up for **FREE** daily news briefs emailed to you at:

www.smartbrief.com/ascd/

NCLB 5-Year Impact Facts reported by Federal DOE:*

Percentage of classes taught by highly qualified teachers has risen to over 90%.

All states and D.C. have an accountability plan in place.

Achievement gaps for both African-American and white 9 yr. olds and Hispanic and white 9 yr. olds has narrowed in both reading and math.

* Sources: 2004 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Long-Term Trends in Academic Progress; 2005 National Report Card (NAEP); National Assessment of Title I Interim Report [Link](#)

Did you know...

Overall UGA Education Program is ranked 3rd among public education colleges in the South.

Graduate students make up 50% of enrollment in COE.

UGA is the nation's 2nd most prolific in education research published.

Task Groups Update

A small internal grant has been obtained to facilitate collaboration and program development among faculty interested in educational policy and evaluation. EPEC is proposing six project groups to serve during the 2007–2008 academic year. The goal of the groups will be to identify issues of mutual interest that have relevance to EPEC, develop an educational brief and paper that may be made available on the website, and initiate research proposals or contracts that will provide ongoing funding and support for the project developed. The following categories of interest have been identified by EPEC and several affiliated faculty members have volunteered to be the contacts for getting the groups going.

- School Finance (Cathy Sielke, csielke@uga.edu)
- Assessment/testing (Jonathan Templin, jtemplin@uga.edu)
- High School Leavers (dropouts) (Elizabeth DeBray-Pelot, edebray@uga.edu)
- Adolescent literacy (Elizabeth DeBray-Pelot, edebray@uga.edu)
- Public School Choice (impact by SES, race); Charter Schools, Home Schooling (Sheneka Williams, smwill@uga.edu)
- Pre-K/School Readiness (Cindy Vail, cvail@uga.edu)
- Comprehensive School Reform (Gayle Andrews, gandrews@uga.edu)
- Aggression/violence/bullying (Andy Horne, ahorne@uga.edu)
- English Language Learners (Rebecca Callahan, rmcallah@uga.edu)
- Other task groups that participants are interested in developing (Andy Horne)

Related to the task groups, there will be some level of funding to provide resources and support for the groups to develop educational briefs, programs for implementation, and research proposals.

Action steps for participation in the EPEC Task Group Projects:

- Contact the faculty member listed to express your interest by **ASAP** or
- Contact Andy Horne (ahorne@uga.edu) if you have another area of interest and can identify potential group members. Depending on the response, we may be able to fund additional groups.

Funding Opportunities

The **National Parent Teacher Association** invites grant proposals for original research and writing on the organization's policies concerning the education and/or welfare of children in the United States. Topics may cover a wide range of policy-related issues that include, but are not limited to: student achievement and assessment; student and parental attitudes; parent involvement; contextual factors (individual, curricular, and school related) in education; educational participation and persistence (kindergarten through career entry); at-risk students; early childhood education; school finance; support for public education; child health; child welfare; the role of mass media; and child advocacy. Maximum Award:

\$5,000. **Deadline: November 16, 2007**

<http://www.pta.org/fellowshi/p/RFP-Fellowships.pdf>

Task Groups

- School Finance
- Assessment/Testing
- High School Leavers
- Adolescent Literacy
- School Choice
- School Readiness
- School Reform
- Violence Prevention
- English Language Learners

Important Date:

Express your interest in a task group **ASAP**. There's still time to get involved. Open to faculty **university-wide**.

Deadlines:

National PTA Grant deadline: Nov. 16

EDUCATION POLICY AND EVALUATION CENTER

University of Georgia
College of Education
570 Aderhold Hall
Athens, GA 30602

Phone: 706-542-4631
Fax: 706-542-4669

Dr. Andy Horne
Interim Director
706-542-4107
ahorne@uga.edu

Dr. Elizabeth DeBray-Pelot
Associate Director
for Policy
706-542-6249
edebray@uga.edu

Dr. Dorothy Harnish
Associate Director
for Evaluation
706-542-4690
harnish@uga.edu

Dr. Sheneka Williams
Policy Research Fellow
706-542-3830
smwill@uga.edu



About EPEC

Policy Research Group

The Policy Research Group within EPEC aims to provide resources to faculty seeking to share the results of their research studies with the policy community in the state. Dr. Elizabeth DeBray-Pelot (edebray@uga.edu), Associate Director, and Dr. Sheneka Williams (smwill@uga.edu), Policy Research Fellow, are available to faculty to assist with writing policy briefs for prospective posting on the Center website and distribution to state policymakers.

The Policy Research Group is currently soliciting faculty members' working papers for posting on the Center website. These are generally papers that have been submitted to a scholarly journal for review or have been presented at a conference. The PRG is also interested in talking to faculty conducting policy-related research that could be featured in the policy section of the website.

Program Evaluation Group

The Program Evaluation Group within EPEC offers rigorous program evaluation, technical assistance, data collection, and information analysis for a variety of public and private stakeholder agencies, foundations, and institutions on local, state, national, and international levels. PEG core staff, under the direction of Dr. Dorothy Harnish, is comprised of professional staff skilled in carrying out multiple projects utilizing various research methods to assess the need for educational programs and their impact and effectiveness.

EPEC Staff:

Penny Rabon, Administrative Associate II, prabon@uga.edu
G13 Aderhold Hall
706-542-4631, 706-542-4669 (EPEC Fax #)

Contact Penny to schedule G14 Conference room for EPEC-related meetings.

Tracy Elder, Program Coordinator III, telder@uga.edu
570E Aderhold Hall
706-542-3846

Grace Thornton, Research Professional III, gthorn@uga.edu
150 Rivers Crossing/G25 Aderhold Hall
706-542-9068/706-542-7236

Jana Thompson, Research Professional III, jthomps@uga.edu
G25 Aderhold Hall
706-542-6334

Scott Pollack, Research Professional III, scottp@uga.edu
570H Aderhold Hall
706-542-7262

COE Dean's Office Support Staff:

Jean Bowen, Interim Grants Development Specialist, jsbowen@uga.edu
G10-H Aderhold Hall