



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

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# EPEC Update

Education Policy and Evaluation Center  
University of Georgia

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## EPEC UPDATES

### Our Thanks to Dr. Andy Horne

Under the leadership of interim director Andy Horne, EPEC has evolved into an active, vital entity. We are pleased to acknowledge that as of January 1, 2008 Dr. Horne has been appointed interim dean for the College of Education. We wish him the best and know how fortunate the College of Education is to be gaining his support and guidance.

### Elizabeth DeBray-Pelot Named EPEC Interim Director

Dr. Elizabeth DeBray-Pelot, who previously served as the Center's Interim Associate Director for Policy, has been named Interim Director. A faculty member in Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy since 2003, Dr. DeBray-Pelot's research interests are in the areas of federal and state policy adoption and implementation. Her goals for the Center include the implementation of a contact plan with state and federal policymakers; building relationships with the state department, governor's office, and superintendents; continued collaboration with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government and the Institute for Higher Education on projects such as the April 18<sup>th</sup> finance conference; and the development of funding proposals and production of policy briefs.

Dr. DeBray-Pelot served as program analyst with the United States Department of Education (1992-1996) and as a research assistant with the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (1997-2001). She received her Ed.D. from Harvard University in 2001.

### Child and Family Policy Initiative Advisory Committee

Dr. Elizabeth DeBray-Pelot attended the initial meeting of the Child and Family Policy Initiative Advisory Committee on December 13<sup>th</sup>. The Initiative's mission is "to improve governance and public policy that impacts the well-being of children and their families through university-based interdisciplinary research, policy analysis, training, and technical assistance." A major goal is to pull together expertise from across the University on a range of issues affecting children and families and to present this information in a coherent format to policymakers; a second related goal is to provide a forum for policymakers to speak directly to the research community.

The Initiative has a new list-serve for sharing information about upcoming events, collaborations, and research opportunities. Please email Melinda Moore at the Carl Vinson Institute ([moore@cviog.uga.edu](mailto:moore@cviog.uga.edu)) to subscribe.

## Policy Impact News

### BRIDGE Act

The *Building Resourceful Individuals to Develop Georgia's Economy Act* (BRIDGE Act) will be at the forefront during the upcoming Georgia legislative session. This legislation would allow students in grades 9-12 to choose a focused program of study to prepare them for postsecondary studies and careers. The goal is to provide students with real-world experience and increased academic rigor. Guidance counselors and graduation coaches would receive training on available postsecondary options, parents/guardians would be involved in their child's graduation plans, and employers would be encouraged to form partnerships with schools to advance student opportunities. If enacted, all students will be required to continue to pass high school graduation tests and end-of-course tests in mathematics, reading, and writing, but those participating in these programs could exempt some end-of-course tests or graduation tests if they pass state-approved industry certification exams. Funding would be provided by the state. Stay tuned for more information.

### Head Start Reauthorization

On November 14, 2007, the Senate and House passed the Conference Report on H.R. 1429, the "Improving Head Start for Schools Readiness Act of 2007" 95-0 which reauthorized the Head Start program. Head Start currently serves over 900,000 children and their families through a network of about 1,600 public and private agencies. According to a press release from U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), "the Conference Report sets clear standards and measures for Head Start programs, improves coordination with other early childhood education programs, and strengthens program accountability." For more information, copy and paste the following link to your browser: <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2007/11/28/13headstart.h27.html?tmp=1806492262> for an article by Alyson Klein in *Education Weekly* titled, "Head Start Measure Expected to Launch New Era for Program."

### Highlights from PISA 2006: Performance of U.S. 15-Year-Old Students in Science and Mathematics Literacy in an International Context

This report summarizes the performance of U.S. students on the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), comparing the scores of U.S. 15-year-old students in science and mathematics literacy to the scores of their peers internationally in 2006. The results show the average combined science literacy scale score for U.S. students to be lower than the OECD average, and on the mathematics literacy scale, U.S. students scored lower than the OECD average. Following the presentation of results, a technical appendix describes the study design, data collection, and analysis procedures that guided the administration of PISA 2006 in the United States and in the other participating jurisdictions. For more information and access to the report, copy and paste the following link into your browser: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2008016>. See the PEN Weekly News-Blast, ASCD SmartBrief, or *Education Weekly* for more on the PISA assessment. *Citation: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education*

### Deciding on Postsecondary Education

This report examined the data and the information that potential students use and need in making decisions about postsecondary education. Special emphasis was given to underserved students (non-traditional aged, minority, and students of low- and moderate- socioeconomic status) participating in the college search and decision making process. The literature review indicated that parents, guidance counselors, mainstream media, college brochures, and institutions are primary sources for information about college. For each group of focus group participants, cost, major/program of study, and convenience/location were major determinants in the college search, application, and matriculation processes. Online web-based resources are quickly gaining prominence among current and recent high school graduates who participated in the focus groups. Findings from this research suggest the need for comprehensible information, additional resources, and improved assistance for prospective college students and their families. For more information and access to the report, copy and paste the following link into your browser:

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2008850>

## EPEC Activities

### Policy Group Activities

The Policy Research Group, in concert with the Education Law Consortium, is planning a conference for Friday, April 18, 2008, 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. entitled "The State of School Finance in Georgia: Findings and Implications for Georgia and Beyond." UGA faculty members Catherine Sielke, John Dayton, and Eric Houck will be among the featured presenters.

### Program Evaluation Group Activities

The Program Evaluation Group has prepared two new research briefs available at the EPEC web site (see page 4 for web address). One outlines lessons learned from our two-year Comprehensive School Reform study, entitled, "Sustaining School Reform."

The second brief provides information about the administration of and the students who took part in the Dual Enrollment program in Georgia from 2001-2004. PEG (formerly the Occupational Research Group) undertook a multi-year study of this program for the Department of Technical and Adult Education with cooperation from the Georgia Department of Education and The University System of Georgia.

## Resources for Review

### 2004/06 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS:04/06) Methodology Report

This report describes and evaluates the methods and procedures used in the 2004/06 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS:04/06), the first follow-up of the cohort of first-time beginning students who were identified as part of the 2003–04 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:04). This cohort was first interviewed in 2004 and identified as first-time beginners (FTBs). An FTB was defined as an individual who began his or her postsecondary education during the 2003–04 academic year. BPS:04/06 is the first of two scheduled follow-up studies that will follow these students through college and into the workforce. The second, and final, follow-up is scheduled to take place in 2009. The BPS study is unique in that it includes both traditional and non-traditional students, follows their paths through postsecondary education over the course of 6 years, and is not limited to enrollment at a single institution. For more information and access to the report, copy and paste the following link into your browser:

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2008184>

### Educational Technology in Teacher Education Programs for Initial Licensure

This report details findings from “Educational Technology in Teacher Education Programs for Initial Licensure,” a survey that was designed to provide policy makers, researchers, educators, and administrators with timely baseline information on a range of topics involving educational technology and teacher education programs for initial licensure at 4-year postsecondary institutions. Findings suggest that teacher education programs for initial licensure were oriented toward preparing teacher candidates to use educational technology. For more information and access to the report, copy and paste the following link into your browser:

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2008040>

*Citation: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education*

### High School Drop-Out Data Available

**The Common Core of Data (CCD)**, <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/>, is a program of the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics that annually collects fiscal and non-fiscal data about all public schools, public school districts and state education agencies in the United States. Currently available is a report that presents findings on the numbers and rates of public school students who dropped out of school in school years 2002–03, 2003–04, and 2004–05, using data from the *CCD State-Level Public-Use Data File on Public School Dropouts* for these years, *Local Education Agency-Level Public-Use Data File on Public School Dropouts: School Year 2004–05*, and the *NCES Common Core of Data Local Education Agency Universe Survey Dropout and Completion Restricted-Use Data File: School Year 2004–05*. For more information and access to the report, copy and paste the following link into your browser:

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/hsdropouts/>.

### From the PEN Weekly NewsBlast 12-7-07: What You Need to Know About Your State's Afterschool Programs

Education stakeholders across the country have begun to recognize the value of quality after-school programs, and are consequently taking steps to increase the access to these programs. The After-school Investments State Profiles Series highlights the ranges of policies and practices that support after-school programs, most of which are publicly financed. The group finds that high quality after-school programs can have significant positive effects on student outcomes, while at the same time low-quality programs can have negative impacts. In light of this research, states have begun to develop definitions of quality, create measures of program quality and improve programs through licensing, accreditation, professional development and incentives. States are also able, through a tiered reimbursement system, to tie higher rates of subsidy reimbursements to high levels of program quality. The profiles available at <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/afterschool/> provide a snapshot of the state of after-school in every state.

## Active Task Groups\*

### Finance

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### Dropout Prevention

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### School Choice

Sheneka Williams,  
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### School Readiness

Cindy Vail, [cvail@uga.edu](mailto:cvail@uga.edu)

### Violence Prevention

John Dayton, [jdayton@uga.edu](mailto:jdayton@uga.edu)

### Qualitative Research

Melissa Freeman,  
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## Pending Groups

### Assessment/Testing

Jonathan Templin,  
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### School Reform

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### Adolescent Literacy

### Post-Secondary (K-16; College)

\*Through a small internal grant, EPEC is facilitating collaboration and program development among faculty through task groups.

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## 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](mailto:edebray@uga.edu)), Associate Director, and Dr. Sheneka Williams ([smwill@uga.edu](mailto: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. Reports, research briefs, and presentations can be accessed by pasting the following address into your browser:

<http://www.coe.uga.edu/EPEC/projects/index.html>

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