



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

AI Cohen Named EPEC Interim Director

Dr. Allan Cohen, faculty member in the Department of Educational Psychology and director of the Educational Research Laboratory at the Georgia Center for Assessment, has been named interim director of the Education Policy and Evaluation Center. Dr. Cohen came to UGA in 2003, following a 24-year tenure at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he served as director of the UW-System Center for Placement Testing and director of the Office of Testing and Evaluation Services.

Dr. Cohen is a widely respected expert in the field of educational psychology and measurement, and his work currently focuses on examining methodological issues in educational measurement primarily with respect to applications in test development. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Iowa and taught at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Purdue University, and Pennsylvania State University prior to joining the faculty at UGA.

EPEC Launches New Website

The new site, <http://www.coe.uga.edu/EPEC/>, features a redesigned look and layout. Viewers can expect to see links to current podcasts, recent photos, and up-to-date news & information. Thanks to our former web designer, Troy Bassett, and to Dave Wynne who currently maintains the EPEC site.

Upcoming Conference at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles at UCLA, the University of North Carolina Center for Civil Rights at the UNC School of Law, and the University of Georgia Education Policy and Evaluation Center will co-sponsor a conference on Thursday, April 2, 2009 entitled "Looking to the Future: Legal and Policy Options for Racially Integrated Education in the South." The goal of conference is to heighten scholarly understanding about the meaning of the Supreme Court's 2007 *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1 (PICS)* decision, as well as to enhance discussion about more immediate and long-term policy options for the future of integration in the South.

Any faculty interested in attending the conference should contact Elizabeth DeBray-Pelot at edebray@uga.edu about registration.

**The Office of the Vice President for Public Service and Outreach (OVPPSO) generously contributed \$1,000 to support EPEC's participation in the Chapel Hill Conference.*

Policy Impact News

Charter Schools Policy Document Released by the U.S. Department of Education

The U.S. Department of Education has released a new publication on creating and maintaining successful charter schools, summarizing its vision for the future of the charter school sector in the U.S., and outlining steps to achieve that vision. Produced by the Department's Office of Innovation and Improvement, *A Commitment to Quality: National Charter School Policy Forum Report* draws from discussions with charter school leaders at the Department's forum on charter schools in May 2008, as well as 15 years of research and experience with charter schools. The forum, which shared lessons and outlined future directions for the charter sector, featured nearly 100 of the foremost leaders on charter schools from across the nation. To access the full report, please copy and paste the following link into your browser: <http://www.ed.gov/admins/comm/choice/csforum/report.pdf>

Allocation Anatomy: District Resource Distribution Practices and Reform Strategies

This report addresses the questions: Are public education funds now focused on student learning? If not, what stands in the way? It explores the effects of micro-budgeting decisions — the policies and behaviors that operate beneath the surface of published budgets — and shows how these often-hidden transactions hamper a district's school improvement efforts. The report examines resource use in two urban school districts, both serving a broad range of students from different demographic backgrounds and both struggling to close the achievement gap. Interviews revealed that district staff members do not recognize their role in resource allocation and have trouble understanding that “the way things have always been done here” represents one of many possible different allocation decisions. The report concludes by urging district leaders to take a fresh look at their allocation practices and consider whether their use of funds supports or undermines their educational improvement strategy. To access the full report, please copy and paste the following link into your browser: http://www.crpe.org/cs/crpe/download/csr_files/pub_sfrp_aa_may08.pdf

NGA Selects States to Participate in Career and Technical Education Policy Academy

On October 23, the National Governors Association (NGA) issued a press release and named Arizona, Nebraska, New Jersey, Ohio and Oklahoma as the five states selected to participate in the *Meeting Academic and Economic Need through Career Technical Education* Policy Academy. According to NGA's website, “States were selected to participate in the Policy Academy through a competitive process open to all states and U.S. territories. The states selected identified a clearly defined challenge within the state's current CTE system; described the potential benefits and expected outcomes of participation in the Academy; and identified a high level state team to be active and engaged throughout the length of the project.” To access the press release, please copy and paste the following link into your browser:

<http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.6c9a8a9ebc6ae07eee28aca9501010a0/?vgnex-toid=0a5b53975ef2d110VgnVCM1000001a01010aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=759b8f2005361010VgnVCM1000001a01010aRCRD>

Resources for Review

Parents' Reports of the School Readiness of Young Children from the National Household Education Surveys Program of 2007

This descriptive report presents initial findings on the school readiness of young children, as reported by their parents, from the School Readiness Survey (PFI) of the 2007 National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES). It also incorporates basic demographic information about the population of children ages 3 to 6 who have not yet entered kindergarten, their parents'/guardians' characteristics, and the characteristics of the households in which they live. For more information and access to the report, copy and paste the following link into your browser: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/2008051.pdf>

A Comparative Study of Teacher Preparation and Qualifications in Six Nations

This is a collaborative, comparative study on the preparation and qualifications of elementary and secondary teachers in six nations and one autonomous region: China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, the United States and Hong Kong. For more information and access to the report, copy and paste the following link into your browser: http://www.cpre.org/images/stories/cpre_pdfs/sixnations_final.pdf

Affiliated Faculty Research

EPEC affiliated faculty members are engaged in sharing their work with policymakers and advising the Center on its substantive priorities. If you are interested in affiliating, please contact Dr. DeBray-Pelot at edebray@uga.edu or Dr. Cohen at acohen@uga.edu.

Dr. Rebecca Callahan, Assistant Professor, Department of Language and Literacy Education

Dr. Rebecca Callahan is co-Investigator on a Russell Sage Foundation award with her colleague at UT Austin, Dr. Chandra Muller. Their three-year project, entitled, "*The role of language and education in the civic integration of adolescent immigrants during the transition to adulthood*" explores how formal and informal educational processes in the high school affect the civic and political development of immigrant young adults. This study has resulted in a number of studies exploring the voting and civic engagement of immigrant young adults. In one study recently published in *Theory and Research in Social Education*, Dr. Callahan and her colleagues find that while parent education largely predicts voting and voter registration for the children of native-born parents, it has no such effect on first and second generation immigrant youth. Rather, for the children of immigrants, high school social science course taking is a direct predictor of voting and voter registration. The quality and quantity of high school social science coursework has a direct impact on the civic and political participation of immigrant young adults as they transition into adult society.

In addition, Dr. Callahan was recently awarded an NSF RDE-FRI grant entitled "*Students with learning disabilities: STEM pathways in the social context.*" This three-year project will explore how school context and individual student sociodemographic characteristics interact with educational programs and processes to influence the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) preparation and achievement of students identified with learning disabilities. For more information, please contact Dr. Rebecca Callahan at rmcallah@uga.edu.

Some of Callahan's recent publications include:

- Callahan, R.M., Wilkinson, L., Muller, C., and Frisco, M. (2008). ESL placement and schools: Effects on immigrant achievement. *Educational Policy*, doi:10.1177/0895904807310034.
- Callahan, R.M., Wilkinson, L., and Muller, C., (2008). School context and the effect of ESL placement on Mexican-origin adolescents' achievement. *Social Science Quarterly* (89) 1, 177-198.

Dr. Jolie Ziomek-Daigle, Assistant Professor, Department of Counseling and Human Development Services

Jolie Ziomek-Daigle was awarded a Poverty and Economy Grant through the Office of the Vice President for Public Service and Outreach in 2008. Her research entitled "Georgia's Graduation Coach Program: Increasing School Completion by Decreasing Drop Out" examined components of the graduation coach program and its emphasis on drop out prevention and intervention. Graduation coaches and students in various school districts were interviewed along with representatives from the Georgia Department of Education and The Governor's Office on Student Achievement. Additionally, state training documents and program materials were also reviewed. After data analysis, a school/family/community partnership model (also known as a graduation team) emerged as an effective strategy in curbing the state and local drop out rate. This partnership model can be used by school counselors, principals, and teachers when working with students who are at-risk for dropping out of school. For more information, please contact Dr. Jolie Daigle at jdaigle@uga.edu.

Some of Ziomek-Daigle's recent publications include:

- Ziomek-Daigle, J. (2007). Connecting communities, schools, and families: An interview with Arthur (Andy) Horne, Ph.D. *The Family Journal*, 15(3), 286-293, doi:10.1177/1066480707301500.
- Ziomek-Daigle, J., Black, L.L., & Kocet, M.M. (2006). Let's dance: Race, faith, and sexual orientation. In S.M. Hobson (Dugger) & L.A. Carlson (Eds). *Critical incidents in counseling children*. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

EPEC Activities

Policy Research Group

EPEC Hosts Mock Presidential Debate

On October 23, several students and COE faculty gathered to hear Drs. Elizabeth DeBray-Pelot and Eric Houck engage in a mock presidential debate. The debate, moderated by Dr. Sheneka Williams, was a non-partisan effort to explore dimensions of the candidates' proposed education policies not fully addressed during the televised presidential debates. To access the debate overview and podcast of the event, please copy and paste the following link into your browser: <http://www.coe.uga.edu/EPEC/news/debate.html>

Education Policy Papers

In early 2009, EPEC will deliver to key legislatures in the state of Georgia our first collection of Education Policy Papers. The purpose of this collection is to provide Georgia policymakers with in-depth analysis on a range of education issues. Each paper will review the current literature, discuss the Georgia context, and make conjectures about directions for policymakers. Look for more information about the publication in the next issue of *EPEC Update*.

Spring Conference Announcement

EPEC will host its 2nd annual spring policy conference on Friday, May 1, 2009 (9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.). The conference will highlight varying perspectives on the new state-federal relationship in education policy and its relevance to Georgia education. Look for more information in the next issue of *EPEC Update*.

Program Evaluation Group

Teacher Evaluation Process for Georgia

EPEC Project Coordinator Tracy Elder led a project to develop the new statewide teacher evaluation system for the State of Georgia under a contract with the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE). A team consisting of PEG research personnel from EPEC, GaDOE personnel, and former UGA faculty from educational leadership and teacher education created a set of teacher performance-based standards, rubrics, and evaluation procedures and forms, drawing from Georgia's Framework for Teaching and the School Keys (Georgia School Standards). Development of the teacher evaluation process was guided by input from a state level advisory group consisting of superintendents, teachers, administrators, and representatives from BOR, PSC, PAGE, GAE, and GaDOE. Pilot tests of evaluation components and feedback from various groups including the State Superintendent's advisory boards, master teachers, and superintendents from across the state impacted the final product. A field study of the teacher evaluation system (CLASS) will be conducted in over 200 schools throughout Georgia during 2008-09, and the system will be available for use by all Georgia schools in fall of 2009.

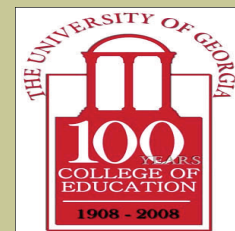
Eat Healthy, Be Active (EHBA)

EPEC researcher Scott Pollack is working as an evaluation consultant on an educational module developed by faculty in the Department of Child and Family Development. This module is designed to help child care providers teach preschool children about health and nutrition. It contains a number of lessons covering healthy eating habits and the benefits of physical activity, as well as training materials and a resource kit for child care providers.

Support Services

Policy Research Group

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

EPEC has assisted with the development of the evaluation component of grant proposals for a number of UGA and COE departments and faculty, Clarke County School District, and Georgia Communities in Schools. EPEC can serve as the external evaluator or assist in designing and conducting evaluation activities required for grant and contract proposals. PEG personnel have been included as evaluators in more than ten different grant proposal submissions this year.

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About EPEC

Policy Research Group

The Policy Research Group within EPEC aims to conduct objective and timely research on education and education policy issues. Associate Director Dr. Elizabeth DeBray-Pelot and research fellows are available to assist faculty with writing briefs for prospective posting on the EPEC website or for dissemination to policymakers and key stakeholder groups. Current projects, research briefs, and working papers can be accessed by pasting the following address into your browser: <http://www.coe.uga.edu/EPEC/policy/index.html>

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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