Abstracts of Symposium Presentations
Arranged by Session

**Concurrent Session 1  Thursday, September 29  11:00 – 12:00 PM**

**1-A Sponsored Session**

Data Visualization with Tableau: Data Visualization - Fast and Actionable  
Charlie Sanders, Interworks

**1-B Measuring Achievement**

The School Choice Paradox: Achievement versus Attainment  
Collin Hitt and Patrick Wolf, Southern Illinois University School of Medicine

Rigor-marole: Why Most of What We’re Doing with PARCC is Missing the Point  
Paul Zavitkovsky, University of Illinois at Chicago

**1-C Early College Transition**

Who Will Succeed and Who Will Struggle? Using Indiana State Data to Predict Early College Success  
Elisabeth (Lyzz) Davis, Jim Lindsay, and Jennifer Stephan, American Institutes for Research and REL Midwest

Acceleration Programs in Minnesota: Characteristics and College Pathways of Students Who Prepare  
Elisabeth (Lyzz) Davis, American Institutes for Research and REL Midwest, and Meredith Fergus, Minnesota Office of Higher Education

**1-D Innovations in Early Childhood Education**

Cohesive Early Childhood Educator Communities in Synchronous Online Learning  
Emily Brown Hoffman, University of Illinois at Chicago

Not *either/or* but *both/and*: How the Policies and Protocols of One South Side Preschool Support Culturally Sustaining Literacy Interactions  
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Data Visualization with Tableau: Data Visualization – Fast and Actionable

Charlie Sanders, Senior Solutions Architect, Chicago Practice Lead, Interworks, Inc.

The typical go-to application for analysis and management’s requests is Excel. How do we evolve from drowning in a sea of numbers in worksheet to walking amidst true data visualizations? InterWorks will discuss how school districts, universities and foundations are navigating the data landscape and producing dynamic visualizations using Tableau. This session covers experiences and actionable takeaways on how to work with data and producing compelling results in a visual medium. We’ll demonstrate how to use Tableau to make data analytics fast, easy, beautify and most importantly, useful.
The School Choice Paradox: Achievement versus Attainment

Collin Hitt, PhD, Assistant Professor, Medical Education, Research Director of Continuing Professional Development
Southern Illinois University School of Medicine

Patrick Wolf, PhD, Distinguished Professor and 21st Century Endowed Chair in School Choice,
Department of Education Reform
University of Arkansas

Introduction

School choice programs are prevalent throughout Illinois, particularly in Chicago: charter schools, magnet schools and other public schools of choice have expanded steadily in number over the past decades. This mirrors a national trend.

Researchers and policymakers make a strong assumption, when it comes to school choice: standardized test scores are the best metric for judging the effectiveness of such initiatives. Programs and schools that increase test scores are privileged for expansion and additional funding. Programs that fail to increase test scores are often targeted for elimination.

This paper challenges that assumption. A growing number of studies are finding that school choice programs can improve high school graduation rates, college attendance and earnings - without producing gains in test scores.

Methods and Preliminary Findings

This study is a meta-analysis, the most thorough yet conducted on the effect that school choice has on educational degree attainment. We collect every experimental and quasi-experimental study of school choice in the U.S. that contains attainment-impacts. Beyond private school voucher programs and charter schools, we collect evidence on choice programs such as early college high schools, magnet schools and vocational schools. Four of those studies are set in Illinois.

Our question is whether program impacts on test scores predicted impacts on later outcomes. We review every known study that contains participant-effect estimates for both student achievement and attainment. We collapse findings into four categories: significantly positive, insignificantly positive, insignificantly negative, and significantly negative.

Using vote counting methods, we find that program impacts on achievement are inconsistent, perhaps on balance weakly positive. However, impacts on attainment are much more consistently positive. This pattern itself implies that some programs have produced larger attainment impacts than achievement impacts. But the findings are actually more complicated.

Yes, positive impacts on attainment frequently follow from programs that produced no measurable positive impacts on achievement (e.g. Wolf et al, 2013; Neild, Boccanfuso and Byrnes, 2013). Moreover, null effects on high school graduation and college attendance have followed from programs that produced substantial test score gains (e.g. Angrist et al. 2013). Across these studies, achievement impact estimates appear to be almost entirely uncorrelated with attainment impacts, based on Goodman and Kruskall’s gamma and Pearson’s Chi-squared tests.

Preliminary Conclusions

These findings beg serious questions about the heavy use of standardized tests as the exclusive or primary metric upon which to evaluate school choice programs. If test score gains are neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for producing long-term gains in crucial student outcomes, then current approaches to accountability for school choice programs are questionable.
**Rigor-marole: Why Most of What We’re Doing with PARCC is Missing the Point**

Paul Zavitkovsky, Center for Urban Education Leadership, University of Illinois at Chicago

Most public discussion of PARCC testing has focused on changes in rigor and difficulty that ostensibly produce much lower scores than earlier ISAT testing. But differences in scoring almost completely disappear once conventional, normative metrics are applied to both tests.

This presentation illustrates that current PARCC reporting practices:

- perpetuate widespread misconceptions about what standardized tests actually measure
- ignore most of PARCC’s real potential to support improved teaching and learning

PARCC testing and Common Core State Standards have not, in and of themselves, produced declines in student achievement or increases in the state’s ability estimate progress toward college and career readiness. Changes in ISAT cut scores could easily have produced comparable results as early as 1999 had policy makers opted to do so. What makes PARCC different is that it probes more deeply into how students think and what they understand. Inexplicably, however, most of this descriptive information continues to go unreported to educators, parents and students.

Tests like the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) have developed thoughtful strategies for mapping and reporting standardized test information that educators can use to deepen understanding of test results and build greater rigor into instructional practice. Failing to map and report PARCC information in similar ways squanders most of PARCC’s potential, and continues to waste time, money and political capital on test information that has little or no instructional value for most parents and teachers.
Raising students’ expectations and the rigor of academic standards have been promoted as school improvement strategies. States and high schools are seeking to better identify, and ultimately better prepare, students who may not be ready to succeed in college. Almost all seniors graduating from high school plan to attend college, but not all students enroll in or complete college. For students who do enroll, more than one third take remedial classes. Overall, less than 60 percent of students who enroll in college earn a degree, and this rate is much lower for those who enroll in remedial classes.

Schools aiming to increase college success can use data to identify students who may struggle in college and provide additional support. This study aimed to identify data elements commonly found in state education agency databases that can distinguish students who might need additional support to succeed in college.

We examined the 2010 cohort of Indiana high school graduates who enrolled in Indiana public colleges in the fall after high school graduation (n = 32,564). This study adopted four indicators of early college success: enrolling in only nonremedial courses, completing all attempted credits, persisting to a second year of college, and a composite of those indicators. This study aimed to answer three research questions: (1) What percentage of Indiana high school graduates who enrolled in a public Indiana college arrived at college ready to succeed, (2) Did the percentage of students ready to succeed vary by student, high school, or college characteristics, and (3) Did the percentage of students ready to succeed vary by indicator?

We used HLM to identify demographic, academic, and behavioral data elements in the Indiana Student Information System that predicted these indicators of early college success, accounting for other variables.

Half of all students were successful by all indicators, and most students were successful by at least one indicator (92 percent). A greater percentage of students enrolled in four-year colleges demonstrated early success in college than those enrolled in two-year colleges. There were large gaps in early college success between Blacks and Whites/others (between 13 and 27 percentage points) and between students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL) and those not eligible (between 14 and 22 percentage points). Standardized test scores and advanced coursework predict all four indicators. In addition, students’ high school absences and the average achievement level of their high school predict some indicators of success, but not others. Finally, most of the variation in early college success across students is not explained by the examined predictors.

These results raise several considerations. First, it may be beneficial to target resources to subgroups in order to reduce racial and socioeconomic gaps. Second, educators and policymakers may want to use multiple indicators of success. The level of early college success varies by indicator, with larger differences among two-year college students. Different indicators may relate to different goals for measuring early college success. Third, educators and policymakers may consider using multiple measures to predict early college success that represent multiple dimensions of college readiness and success beyond academic preparation. Finally, additional factors (e.g., noncognitive factors) could explain additional variation in early college success, and help identify students who may struggle in college.
Acceleration Programs in Minnesota: Characteristics and College Pathways of Students Who Prepare

Elisabeth (Lyzz) Davis, PhD, Senior Research, American Institutes for Research

Meredith Fergus, PhD, Minnesota Office of Higher Education

**Perspective**

Acceleration programs are academically challenging courses in which high school students can simultaneously earn credit toward a high school diploma and a postsecondary degree. Research shows that enrolling in acceleration programs during high school is associated with multiple measures related to postsecondary success (Speroni, 2011; Tierney, Bailey, Constantine, Finkelstien, & Hurd, 2009), and can increase the likelihood of college enrollment and degree completion (e.g., Berger, Turk-Bicakci, Garet, Knudson, & Hoshen, 2014). Since the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act of 1985 (Minnesota Statute 124.D09), policymakers and practitioners in Minnesota have used acceleration programs such as Advanced Placement, postsecondary enrollment options, and concurrent enrollment programs as a strategy to improve students’ college readiness and college success. Thousands of high school students in Minnesota participate in acceleration programs each year, some earning enough college credit by the end of high school to have a college class standing of sophomore or higher (Minnesota Office of Higher Education, n.d.).

**Objective**

Despite the widespread use of these programs, little information exists on the types of students and schools that access these programs and participants’ postsecondary pathways such as whether and where they enroll in college. Members of the Midwest College and Career Success Research Alliance collaborated with the Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest to conduct a study that provides a broad description of acceleration programs in Minnesota, including rates of participation, descriptions of student participants, and participants’ postsecondary outcomes.

**Method**

REL Midwest’s study team performed this investigation by obtaining and analyzing data from the Minnesota State Longitudinal Education Data System provided by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education. The current study used descriptive statistics and HLM to examine the following questions focused on the 2011 cohort of Minnesota high school graduates:

1. What proportion of 2011 graduates participated in acceleration programs and were awarded credits by the Minnesota two- and four-year colleges in which they enrolled?
2. What were the characteristics of students and schools that (a) participated in acceleration programs and (b) were awarded credit in these programs?
3. What were the characteristics (that is, type, selectivity level) of colleges that awarded credit to acceleration program participants who enrolled in their institutions?
4. Was participation in acceleration programs associated with (a) college enrollment, (b) college readiness, as measured by taking only nonremedial courses in the first semester, or (c) persistence to a second year of college?
5. Do the associations between participation in acceleration programs and (a) college enrollment, (b) college readiness, and (c) college persistence remain the same after statistically controlling for other student- and school-level variables?

**Results**

Results for this study are still under review by IES, however, we are reaching the end of the review process. We anticipate that the report will be released well ahead of the conference.

**Implications**

The results of this study may point to the potential contribution of these programs to student outcomes, but more rigorous research is needed to draw a causal inference about the impact of acceleration programs on students’ postsecondary success.
We now have much research depicting how a key component of adult learning is active engagement, specifically how collaborative, reflective, dialogic participation around learning material is synonymous with high-quality adult learning opportunities. However, active and dialogic learning opportunities are sparse for early childhood teachers, who feel estranged from their K-12 peers and are often geographically and institutionally separated from other early childhood teachers. This 10 week descriptive case study employed virtual ethnographic methods to investigate how an online learning environment, created with the purpose of providing practicing early childhood educators with continuing education, facilitates active dialogic engagement in an online learning space. Specifically, this study answers the research question: How does a synchronous online early childhood educator course facilitate active engagement around content and pedagogical knowledge? Building upon Garrison, Anderson, & Archer’s (2000) Community of Inquiry framework, findings discuss how the cohesive online community built and sustained within the online class provides a stable foundation for active learning. The connection of social presence and teaching presence are highlighted through descriptions of interplay between the class’s instructional design and class members’ use of various platform modalities.
Not *either/or* but *both/and*: How the Policies and Protocols of one South Side Preschool Support Culturally Sustaining Literacy Interactions

Colleen Whittingham, Graduate Research Assistant, Curriculum and Instruction, University of Illinois at Chicago

This case study describes the preschool literacy interactions within one classroom that evidenced culturally sustaining practices to better understand (1) the instructional moves of classroom teachers meeting the diverse needs of young learners, and (2) the resources in place to facilitate and support these interactions. To make sense of complex social interactions and networks of influence, I conducted a case study using ethnographic methods (Dyson & Genishi, 2005) complimented by video-based fieldwork (Jewitt, 2012). By intimately studying an organically occurring case, this research both produces insightful knowledge about high quality preschool practices in a primarily African American setting, and explores a broader range of contextual conditions and influences. While video-based field work facilitated a close look at the sites of interaction between teachers and students as they engage in authentic literacy events, traditional ethnographic methods (Dyson & Genishi, 2005) informed my understanding of the systemic structures in place to foster culturally sustaining practices in one early childhood setting.

By illuminating the relationship between one microsystem (i.e., local literacy interactions) and one broader macrosystem (i.e., center policies, protocols, and routines), I present evidence of both the local literacy practices of one preschool classroom, and the organizational and pedagogical infrastructures in place which influence and are influenced by these classroom practices.
Changes in Pre-service Teachers during a Course-Based Standardized Data Use Intervention

Todd Reeves, PhD, Assistant Professor, Educational Research and Assessment
Jui-Ling (Raye) Chiang, Instructional Technology
Northern Illinois University

Current K-12 educators are increasingly expected to use data to inform their decision making in the classroom. However, research estimates limited opportunities for pre-service teachers to learn how to use data, including standardized test data, for instructional decision-making purposes. This paper, in response, describes the results of a pretest-posttest study of a six-hour standardized data use intervention for pre-service teachers. In particular, the present study investigated participant perceptions of the impact of the intervention on data-driven decision-making skills and tracked short-term pre- to post-intervention changes in participants’ self-efficacy beliefs, anxiety, and objectively-measured data interpretation skills.

Data use entails asking various questions of data, and analyzing and interpreting assessment data to draw inferences and/or make instructional decisions based on those data (e.g., student strengths and weaknesses, explanations for performance, and appropriate interventions to implement). Within the realm of teacher data use related to student content mastery specifically, one can focus on data at different student levels (e.g., whole grade, subgroup) or content grain sizes (e.g., overall, standard, strand, item). By informing with data decisions related to instructional goals, methods, and time allocation, teachers can theoretically better target their instructions to students, ultimately resulting in higher levels of achievement.

The six-hour, facilitated, collaborative, and highly structured intervention was grounded in models of the data use process. The assessment course-embedded intervention engaged pre-service teachers in asking and answering four different kinds of questions (e.g., achievement status and growth, strengths and weaknesses, instructional implications) at five different student levels (e.g., individual, subgroup, school) with external assessment data (e.g., benchmark tests, once-a-year state tests) presented in tables, charts, and score reports.

We employed a one-group pretest-posttest pre-experimental design with data collected via pretest and posttest survey. The analytic sample comprised 58 undergraduate pre-service teachers who were enrolled in an assessment course. Perceived intervention impacts on participants’ data-driven decision making skills were assessed using 20 posttest survey items; gains in data-driven decision making self-efficacy and anxiety were assessed using the Data Driven Decision-Making Efficacy and Anxiety (3D-MEA); and gains in data interpretation skills were assessed using a 10-item researcher-developed objective test. Data analysis entailed multivariate and univariate mean testing.

Results include statistically significant, short-term changes in participants’ data-driven decision making self-efficacy and objectively-measured data interpretation skills. The multivariate set of change scores (i.e., self-efficacy, anxiety, and data-driven decision making skills) was statistically different than zero, $T^2=1.18$, $F(5,43)=10.16, p<.001$. Follow-up univariate tests (dependent samples t-tests) showed changes in four of five measures.

While evidence reported here is indeed suggestive of the intervention’s impact on pre-service teachers, findings should be interpreted in light of this study’s limitations. Most notably, the pretest-posttest design precludes causal inferences about the intervention’s impact, and the findings warrant caveats related to internal validity threats such as maturation and testing. Nonetheless, these findings indicate that the intervention holds promise.
When RtI Feels like an “NFL” Draft: A Case Study of Response to Intervention in a Low Performing School

Margaret Evans, PhD, Visiting Assistant Professor, Illinois Wesleyan University

Research Overview: The recent political emphasis on data-driven decision making and evidenced-based teaching (Biesta, 2007; Hargreaves & Braun, 2013; Kvernbekk, 2011) spurred a need to investigate how practicing teachers were making sense of and use of students’ performance data (Coburn & Turner, 2012; Little, 2012). To address this need, a team of graduate students and faculty at the University of Illinois examined how teacher-teams in grades 3-5 analyzed and interpreted student performance data. Using a case study approach, we recruited a sample of 6 teacher-teams across three schools in Illinois. Researchers observed over 45 hours of teacher data-use conversations across two academic school years (2013-2015). Our research team quickly discovered that in this case study, teachers primarily analyzed students’ performance data in order to comply with Illinois’ Response to Intervention (RtI) state policy (ISBE, 2008). Drawing on the data collected within the broader project, I focused upon one school site in order to better understand how a struggling school with a high number of struggling students attempted to comply with RtI and respond to students with low performance data.

Findings: As one participant put it, the process of RtI felt like an “NFL draft” as teachers negotiated which of the vast number of students who merited a “scientific, research-based interventions” (ISBE, 2008, p. 8) would receive one of the limited numbers of spots available. The problem teachers faced is that a large proportion of students’ performance data suggested the need for Tier II and Tier III interventions. Yet, the school could only offer intensive interventions to a small number of students. Instead of making RtI decisions based on evidence, teachers often had to prioritize logistical concerns like available resources and policy mandates. Overall, this research raises issues around RtI policy and evidenced-based interventions in under resourced schools with large numbers of low performing students.
The implementation of data-driven decision making practices (DDDM) is a key component of contemporary teachers’ professional practice. As such, the measurement of DDDM and related constructs is important for multiple purposes in both research and practice (e.g., identifying teacher needs around DDDM). With the present study, we examined the score factor structure of the Data Driven Decision-Making Efficacy and Anxiety Inventory (3D-MEA), an existing measure of data driven decision-making-related self-efficacy and anxiety.

DDDM has been theorized as a process in which an actor 1) accesses or collects data, 2) filters, organizes, or analyzes data into information, 3) combines information with expertise and understanding to build knowledge, 4) knows how to respond and takes action or adjusts one’s practice, and 5) assesses the effectiveness of these actions or outcomes that result. Two other constructs, self-efficacy and anxiety related to DDDM, can facilitate or constrain DDDM. Self-efficacy for DDDM has been defined as “teachers’ beliefs in their abilities to organize and execute the necessary courses of action to successfully engage in classroom-level DDDM to enhance student performance”. DDDM anxiety is “the trepidation, tension, and apprehension teachers feel related to their ability to successfully engage in DDDM” (Dunn et al., p. 87).

The study’s participants (n = 365) were K-12 teachers located in a Midwestern state who served in instructional roles. The Data Driven Decision-Making Efficacy and Anxiety (3D-MEA) inventory’s 20 items assessed four dimensions of DDDM self-efficacy and DDDM anxiety. Using IBM-SPSS AMOS v. 22.0 to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis, the study employed the maximum likelihood estimation method to minimize the discrepancy in the fit between the estimated population covariance matrix and the observed covariance matrix.

Confirmatory factor analysis of 3D-MEA scores from a sample of Midwestern teachers replicated the initially-hypothesized five-factor internal score structure from Dunn et al. (2013). The standardized factor loadings ranged from 0.655 to 0.909. All of the communality indices (h^2) had very strong values that ranged from 0.429 to 0.826. In terms of model fit, the comparative fit index (CFI) of 0.945 was beyond the literature-supported threshold of ≥ .90. The Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) of 0.935 value was acceptable. The value of the root mean square residual (RMR) of 0.043 and was found to be a “good” fit, where values < .08 are desired. The value of the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of 0.071 (90% CI 0.064, 0.079) was deemed “reasonable.” The present study, then, bolsters the case for the instrument’s use with U.S. teachers broadly, though additional validation work is still warranted with different populations.
Evidence-Based School Leadership Interventions and ESSA: What Qualifies and Where is More Research Needed?

Erika Hunt, PhD, Center for the Study of Education Policy, Illinois State University
Bradford R. White, Associate Director, Illinois Education Research Council

This session will share information about a new RAND report that outlines how ESSA can be used to support evidenced-based school leadership interventions. The presentation will begin with information about ESSA evidence requirements and then follow with what is the evidence — meeting ESSA requirements — for school leadership supports. The presentation will end with a dialogue around what additional research is needed in the area of school leadership and where might researchers in Illinois collaborate to fill research voids with school leadership.¹

Despite an increasing body of research that evidences the significant impact that principals have on teaching and learning (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2009; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Seashore-Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom & Anderson, 2010), there currently exists a stark absence of an explicit focus on the principalship in public policy. In a report by Manna (2015), he argues that despite growing acknowledgement of principal impact on school and student outcomes, policy makers tend to overlook the needs of the specific role. “The principal’s role has received consistently less attention relative to other topics… policy makers give much more attention to teachers and teacher-related issues than principals” (p. 3). Yet, it is principals that act as “powerful multipliers of effective teaching and leadership practices in schools” (p. 7). In other words, it is the principal that has the ability to impact teaching and learning not only in a single classroom, but school-wide.

Despite this knowledge, leadership programs are disproportionally burdened in grant competitions and policy initiatives that pit them against programs designed to support teachers or other interventions. Programs and studies that focus on interventions involving principals face multiple barriers, including:

- Federal grant programs frequently require an intervention with evidence from a qualifying study that meets What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards and demonstrates a statistically significant impact. However virtually no studies involving interventions with principals qualify as meeting both criteria, unlike teacher or classroom interventions which are plentiful;

- Federal grant opportunities aimed at programmatic strategies often prioritize projects that include an evaluation component that will meet WWC standards upon completion. Unfortunately, projects focused on principals are often considered to be underpowered due to small sample sizes and requirements for propensity score matching that are nearly impossible to meet with the level of funding allowed by the program grant.

- Competitive grants for research on leadership interventions include a narrow outcome focus on student achievement/growth and teacher attendance/retention included in the WCC research standards.

- It takes a longer period of time to demonstrate the impact of principals on student achievement because their actions have an indirect effect (unlike the direct effect of classroom interventions).

The purpose of this presentation will be to inform audience participants of the evidence-based school leadership interventions that have been identified through a research review by RAND. Secondly, the presenters will engage in a dialogue with audience participants to develop strategies and ideas for further research in school leadership areas that could provide more qualifying studies in school leadership meeting WWC standards; thus elevating national, state, and district attention to school leadership strategies as viable interventions to improve student learning.

¹ A memo to the USDOE produced by the Center for the Study of Education Policy (see http://education.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/csep/policypapers/Barriers%20to%20Successful%20Leadership%20Proposals%20Memo.pdf) outlined the challenges to securing federal grant funding for school leadership initiatives due to the lack of qualifying research in school leadership.
The purpose of this paper is to describe how one urban principal preparation program is growing its own capacity to monitor and assess the trajectory of leadership growth during its clinical residency in an effort to improve program coherence. The premise of this work is that better assessment of candidate development, in real time, can help us better understand the markers that most often seem to characterize the development of novice leaders. By better understanding developmental markers, we hypothesize that academic and clinical faculty will be better positioned to help novice leaders get the maximum possible return from their residency experience. And if academic and clinical faculty better understand the trajectory of leadership development, there could be stronger scaffolding to and from the clinical residency.
Navigating the Shift to Intensive Principal Preparation in Illinois

Bradford R. White, Associate Director
Amber Stitziel Pareja, PhD, Executive Director of Institutional Research
Holly Hart, PhD, Survey Director
Brenda K. Klostermann, PhD
Michelle Hanh Huynh, Research Specialist
Mary Frazier-Meyers, Graduate Assistant
Janet K. Holt, PhD, Executive Director

This presentation summarizes the progress of sweeping legislation to redesign the way school principals in Illinois are prepared, with the goal of improving schools statewide through higher quality leadership. We present findings from a two-year study assessing the progress of these ambitious reforms and describing the changes that occurred as a result of the new policy. Illinois’ new principal preparation policy required universities across the state to shift from a general training model geared toward multiple school administrative positions to more targeted and selective principal-specific preparation beginning in the 2014-15 school year. As a result, the study found that preparation programs experienced substantial, but not unexpected, declines in enrollment. However, university faculty and school district representatives believe the revised requirements provide more rigorous and realistic preparation for the job. Policymakers and statewide stakeholders have viewed this shift as a transition from an emphasis on the quantity of principals prepared statewide to the quality of their preparation. Staff and principal candidates from the preparation programs, as well as school district personnel interviewed for the study, generally agreed that the new programs are likely to produce school leaders who are more capable of improving schools and raising student achievement. Nevertheless, questions remain about whether the supply of principals prepared in the new programs will be sufficient to meet statewide demand for school leaders. We note that Illinois continues to be a leader in the nationwide effort to improve principal preparation, and conclude that continued efforts are needed to ensure that the redesigned programs fulfill their promise.

1 Illinois Education Research Council, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
2 Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy
3 University of Chicago Consortium on School Research
Undocumented immigrants represent an important segment of Illinois’ student population. They move through the same school system as their documented and native-born peers but face barriers and obstacles unique to their immigration status that hinder their access to higher education. In June 2012 the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program provided important benefits to eligible undocumented youth through relief from deportation and renewable two-year work permits. However, DACA did not address exclusions from federal and state financial student aid. Drawing on in-depth interviews carried out in Illinois from the National UnDACAmented Research Project (NURP), this presentation elucidates the impact of federal and state financial aid exclusions on the postsecondary attainment of undocumented young adults in Illinois.

Following DeGenova’s (2002) framework that seeks to center how immigration policy—by excluding some subjects from the law—creates the conditions experienced by undocumented immigrants, we examine the impact of undocumented students’ exclusion from federal and state financial assistance. We find that Illinois’ undocumented students face tremendous difficulties accessing, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education due to federal and state financial aid restrictions. To cover tuition and related expenses undocumented students drew on limited resources in a semester by semester approach. Among respondents who attended a four-year institution, 70 percent received financial support from family, 68 percent worked to cover tuition expenses, and 10 percent took out private loans. These payment tactics were not mutually exclusive but were combined in a piecemeal approach that was seldom sustainable. Overall, we find that the lack of access to student financial aid:

- Places the entire burden of tuition costs on the students and their families;
- Burdens the family financially, and impacts the students emotionally and academically;
- Delays the transition from high school to higher education;
- Forces students to make multiple “stop-outs” along the road to a college degree; and
- Prevents students from attaining a four-year degree.

The difficulties faced by undocumented students are a direct result of a lack of institutional financial support. Our findings suggest that increased access to financial aid is critical to improving the postsecondary educational attainment of undocumented students. Moreover, it suggests that educators at all levels would benefit from increased training regarding the financial barriers undocumented students face in pursuing postsecondary education, and that barriers to financial aid for undocumented students has larger implications for education policy and the labor market in Illinois.
First generation students may lack academic capital compared to their non-first generation peers with more college-savvy parents. Parents could impart knowledge about the college application and financial aid application process, understanding of how to navigate key decisions in college regarding course load and major, how to find academic supports, and other information. First-generation students are also more likely to come from low-income backgrounds and racial and ethnic minorities. All of these characteristics are associated with disadvantage, but it is not clear how they interact, or which characteristics are most predictive of college outcomes.

We examine the college outcomes of the 2009 cohort of Illinois high school graduates who enrolled in college the fall after their senior year. We observe first-generation status and other potential disadvantages at high school completion, and we follow their college enrollment and completion for four years after high school. In a hierarchical logistic regression we predict college outcomes for first-generation students, students from low-income families, and the interaction of the two, while controlling for college readiness as measured by test scores. Results indicate that both first generation status and low income families have a disadvantage in college completion, even when controlling for college readiness. The study concludes by recommending that the component disadvantages of first-generation status be addressed more precisely in future practice and policy.
Community Partnerships Promoting Latino Leadership and Student Success

Elena Garcia Ansani, EdD, Executive Director, Latino Resources
Andriana Esparza, Student Recruitment & Outreach Specialist
Arianna Roldan
Oakton Community College

Study Goals
Graduation rates for Latino students at a Midwestern suburban community college (MSCC) were reported to be: 14%, 11%, 13%, 19% and 15%, respectively, between 2010 and 2015. Because persistent degree attainment gaps exists for Latinos in Illinois, community partnerships between high schools, colleges and student success nonprofit organizations have become essential for demonstrating how collaborations providing information and resources to students and families who transition from high school to college yield positive outcomes. First generation Latino college students and families must learn to effectively navigate college access systems prior to beginning college. These include: preparing for SAT/ACT; applying for financial aid (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and scholarships; visiting college campuses to determine the right fit for student’s degree program; and development of a tuition budget that will ensure the student's trajectory culminates with college completion. This study examined a community partnership developed between a MSCC and a nonprofit organization during 2015-2016 and the implementation of five (i.e., Hispanic Heritage Month cultural community festival; guest speaker presentation at MSCC; Latino Summit; student success conference presentation; Latino College Readiness Fair) Latino led bilingual college information initiatives. We sought to learn how community partnerships promoting Latino leadership intersected with Latino student success.

Methodology
Through counter-storytelling methodology, the research team collected data from each of the bilingual information outreach events to highlight the community partnership experiences of its members and participants (i.e., Latino students and parents). Data collected included: observational notes, feedback from program attendees, statistical program attendance data, conversations with students and parents, college student participation at bilingual events, reflections from Latino leadership team about mentoring relationships developed with college students, semester progress updates from college students, and various artifacts (i.e., program booklets, flyers, photos, social media postings). This data was categorized by specific groups (e.g., Event Attendance Demographics; Resources Needed to Succeed; Student Participation On/Off Campus; Outcomes) to learn where Latino leadership intersected with student success outcomes.

Findings
This study revealed Latino students and their families require accessible bilingual networks of information to effectively navigate college systems as first-generation college students/families. Testimonials from Latino students and parents affirmed Latino leadership at their high schools and colleges is often grossly underrepresented within these institutions. The 2015-2016 MSCC and nonprofit organization community partnership provided strong evidence to support bilingual information networks as vital resources for successful transitions from high school to college for both Latino students and their parents. Four MSCC Latino college students mentored by members of the Latino leadership team throughout the year successfully achieved degree attainment during spring 2016. This research supports the intersectionality of Latino leadership as a factor for the promotion of Latino student success as supported by community partnerships.
This presentation will describe the development and implementation process East St. Louis School District 189 used to systematically review each school in the district during the 2016 school year through a Performance Management (PM) process. It will include existing performance management approaches, identification of Academic Excellence Indicators (AEI), employing a District Data Team, a focused District Performance Management Team, and school data teams. In summary, the district localized an annual management-oriented evaluation (Worthen & Sanders, 1987) approach, that roughly resembles an accreditation process, to ensure district building leaders maintained focus on performance improvement. The AEI process was wholly a District 189 process that was informed by the Chicago Public Schools’ (CPS) School Quality Rating Policy process (CPS, 2013).

District 189 took an aggressive approach to improve the overall quality of education for the students of East Saint Louis. A District Data Team came together weekly to review data trends using district data systems as primary data sources. The District Data Team identified metrics to evaluate the health of the district, as well as, drive the focus for improvements within each building thereby recognizing that each school environment would have its own unique set of needs. Metrics within the PM, AEI and accompanying rubrics centered around student performance data, student growth data, correlations between teacher evaluation and student growth, attendance and behavior, student supports and services, teacher supports, health and wellness, and climate and culture. A carefully crafted team structure included the District PM Team and School Leadership Teams to evaluate, reflect upon, and provide feedback on the predetermined metrics.

After the first year of this process, District 189 discovered that the metrics targeted in the PM and AEI provided valuable reflection and focus for building principals to monitor the impact of improvement efforts. The ratings and results from these tools fell in line with those from outside external review teams from AdvancED. While the standards from AdvancED were broad and overarching, the metrics from the PM and AEI allowed School Leadership Teams to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses within their school systems. Most building leaders reported that the process and feedback received from the District PM Team was valuable in identifying next steps in their improvement processes. These changes will result in increased value to leaders and their improvement efforts.
School Improvement Grants (SIG) target chronically underperforming schools in an attempt to raise achievement. Academic studies on SIG show mixed results nationwide and gravitate toward broad quantitative analysis and anecdotal case studies. The research for this study is grounded in the human capital element of SIG work. This study used qualitative, semi-structured interviews that gathered data to assess the change process over the course of SIG implementation at Peoria High School from the perspective of those who participated the grant lifecycle (Teachers, Administrators, Students). The study also seeks to understand the role of the “lead partner” (Consortium for Educational Change in this study) as a key relationship in leading and organizing the organizational change process inherent in SIG implementation. Interview data were coded and analyzed for key themes and findings were categorized into core change areas and combined with relevant quantitative data for context. The major insight was that while SIG implementation caused major initial disruption amongst faculty and administrators, it served as a catalyst for adopting collaborative leadership processes and ultimately improved communication around teaching practice. Future low-performing schools grant designers in the ESSA era would do well to consider the long term impact of staff turnover and the economic shocks of transitioning from high-funding periods during grants to the post-grant years, specifically regarding teaching resources and professional training.
This presentation will provide a preliminary analysis and findings along with implications for Illinois education and specifically teacher preparation institutions. As mandates increase for institutional accountability of candidate performance and subsequent candidate tracking, this presentation will provide a discussion of the design, analysis, findings, and difficulties related to substantive candidate tracking and employment trends. This study is an extension of a longitudinal project that has been ongoing since 2002. Originally, this study focused on the impacts of elementary teacher preparation model on persistence in the field limited to only Illinois State Board of Education Teacher Data Warehouse (TDW) data. These data provided only public school employment tracking for candidates. Participants who were in Illinois non-public school education positions or in non-teaching positions in Illinois public schools could not be tracked using the TDW data source. The current study, while limited to Illinois, tracks all Illinois employment persistence since graduation, including education and non-education positions and public and private institutions.
Results will be presented from a qualitative implementation study of innovative and promising initiatives carried out by the recipients of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) Early Childhood Educator Preparation Program Innovation (EPPI) Grants. The IBHE funded partnerships, comprised of two- and four-year institutions, to further develop models for early childhood educator preparation and to build capacity in key areas of need. Recipients used grant funds to develop a wide range of seamless pathways for degree and credential attainment through innovative articulation and alignment of curriculum initiatives, strategies for advising and supporting transfer students, and aligning assessments to demonstrate candidate progress toward or attainment of key competencies. Promising practices to improve quality field experience placements, early math learning, bilingual/English language learning, and infant/toddler development were also implemented. Core components of the initiatives will be identified. Challenges to successful implementation, along with policy and practice recommendations will also be discussed.

Results of this study will inform Illinois education stakeholders, particularly those in early childhood education, regarding promising practices to increase the quality of the early childhood workforce. Higher education institutions will also learn innovative strategies to improve the early childhood workforce pipeline through smoother transitions from the two-year to the four-year institutions, as well as opportunities for strengthening the capacity of early childhood educators to meet the needs of their students.
Aligning Higher Education and Workforce Credentialing Systems to Promote Attainment: Voices and Lessons from Institutional Partnerships

Stephanie Bernoteit, EdD, Associate Director for Academic Affairs, Illinois Board of Higher Education

Nancy Latham, EdD, Professor, Early Childhood Education, Illinois State University

Johnna Darragh, PhD, Professor, Early Childhood Education, Heartland Community College

Janet Holt, PhD, Executive Director

Brenda K. Klostermann, PhD

Illinois Education Research Council

Relevance to Illinois. Well-prepared professionals are key to supporting the overall development of children in early learning and care settings (Barnett, 2004; Institute of Medicine, 2015). In Illinois, state registry data indicate that 75% of early childhood teachers, 32% of assistants, and 85% of directors working in licensed early care and education settings have degrees (INCCRRA, 2014). Yet, the preparation of these professionals may have centered on fields other than child development and early education. In addition, while 92.9% of early childhood professionals have some college education, many have taken coursework without completing a degree or credential (INCCRRA, 2014). Increased attention on the importance of well-educated, early childhood teachers (IOM, 2015), as well as projections for growing employment opportunities in the field underscores the significance of the work being done in early childhood educator preparation programs (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014).

In 2012 and 2013, the State of Illinois was awarded funds through the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge to strengthen the training and support of early learning personnel and create systems to align all early care and education programs with high-quality early learning and development standards. As part of this work, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, in collaboration with the Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development and other state education agencies, awarded grants to partnerships of two- and four-year institutions. The Early Childhood Educator Preparation and Program Innovation (EPPI) partnership grants focused on the collaborative redesign of early childhood educator preparation programs with an emphasis on formalized articulation to support candidate transfer and alignment with workforce credentials.

The Illinois Education Research Council has been engaged in studies of the work of EPPI grant partners to better understand the challenges associated with cross-institutional program redesign and the opportunities leveraged by partners to meet regional workforce needs in the field of early childhood. This session will highlight the findings from two interrelated projects: (1) an IERC study of EPPI grant partners and the strategies employed by these partners to address regional workforce needs and (2) a monograph highlighting the voices of faculty engaged in improving pathways for candidates to transfer and secure employment in the field of early childhood. Findings from both projects will be presented in terms of the key levers and barriers involved in advancing the alignment of stackable credentials within degree programs.

Methods. The descriptive study to be highlighted in the presentation was qualitative and primarily relied on structured interviews that took place via telephone. Summaries of the interviews were developed and sent to the interviewees for review. Faculty voices are represented in a monograph project focusing on the perspectives of two- and four-year institutional partners engaged in this work.
The Illinois Longitudinal Data System: What is it? What’s been accomplished? How can it help researchers?

Elliot Regenstein, ILDS Governing Board Chair
Illinois Longitudinal Data System

Jonathan Furr, Executive Director, Education Systems Center
Northern Illinois University

This session will provide a general overview of recent progress on the establishment of the Illinois Longitudinal Data System, including an update on technical architecture development, governance activities, and creation of various end-user reports. The session will also include an interactive discussion with participants on how the ILDS can best support the needs of the research community.
The Stellar Girls program was created in 2011 by the iBIO Institute EDUCATE Center, with funding by Astellas USA Foundation, to inspire young women to enter into science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) careers. Stellar Girls introduces 3rd–8th grade girls to current, interesting, “Big Ideas” in STEM fields. The program took a rigorous approach to studying student content gains.

Stellar Girls activities incorporate Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS Lead States, 2013) and Common Core State Standards (CCSS, 2012). Activities are woven into lessons that provide authentic problem contexts and student-centered investigations. Through these learning experiences, students develop hands-on investigation and problem-solving skills, deepen core content knowledge, and realize the connections of crosscutting concepts among various disciplines. The goals were to improve girls’ curiosity and self-efficacy in science, and to build students’ awareness of exciting careers in STEM-based industries, which informed the evaluation/research questions.

Student content tests concern the program’s four unit content areas of Feeding, Fueling, Healing, and Saving. Using statistical item analysis the evaluator and program director worked to identify well-suited items that were reflective of the content and illustrative of student content understanding.

Eight tests were developed for the four content areas using released items from valid and nationally normed sources. Four tests were identified for 3rd–5th grade students and another four were developed for 6th–8th grade students. Among the eight tests pre- and post-tests administered, students completing six tests had highly statistically significant gains (p < 0.001) with moderate to large effect sizes. This include all four of the 3rd–8th grade tests administered. The two 6th–8th grade tests that did not show growth were likely effected by a small post-test response.

The presentation will include background on the Stellar Girls program, a description of sources used to identify test questions, the process of collaboration between the evaluator and the project director, and reporting on the test findings and test analysis.

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1 iBios Institute Education Center

2 Goshen Education Consulting, Inc.
Training and Professional Experiences of Online Teachers: Training, Challenges, and Implications for Illinois

Peggy Clements, PhD, Senior Researcher, American Institutes for Research and REL Midwest

Erin Stafford, Research Associate II, Education Development Center and Regional Education Laboratory (REL) Midwest

Cindy Hamblin, Executive Director, Illinois Virtual Academy

The use of supplemental online courses by elementary and secondary schools continues to grow in the United States. Despite this growth, limited guidance is available regarding the kind of training that online teachers should receive. As recently as 2014, only four states and the District of Columbia required teachers to participate in training or professional development related to online instruction. Given that online teaching presents unique challenges, there is a need for more detailed information, not only about online teachers' experiences with training and professional development, but also the professional challenges they face. To address this need, an alliance of education researchers and online learning stakeholders, the Midwest Virtual Education Research Alliance, conducted a survey study addressing these issues. The session will present the survey results, emphasizing their implications for policies regarding online learning in Illinois.
More children are expelled from public preschools than K-12 schools each year and these children are disproportionately male and African American (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Expulsion from private center-based preschool programs are estimated to be up to four times higher than public programs but little to no research has focused on this population (Gilliam, 2006). Access to mental health consultants reduces teachers’ tendency to expel children, research has not yet examined more recently implemented supports such as social-emotional learning (SEL) curricula or resources.

In this study, 116 teachers were recruited from five neighborhood types in Chicago. Teachers in low-income majority Black neighborhoods reported the highest rate of requested expulsions. Teachers reported that children whom they asked to have removed from their classrooms were mostly four-year olds, male, Black, and displaying unsafe behaviors. Program administrators met with parents in half of these cases, and 20% of requests resulted in expulsion. Teachers who requested expulsions tended to: work in for-profit center, be more depressed, perceive their jobs as more demanding, hold lower beliefs about the value of SEL, and experience more difficulties and less support in their work with parents.

As for SEL supports, teachers in high income majority White neighborhoods have on average fewer SEL supports than teachers in both low-income White and low-income Hispanic neighborhoods. Simply having access to more SEL supports is not associated with requesting fewer expulsions, but teachers who reported more frequent use of available SEL supports tended to request to have fewer children removed. Furthermore, teachers who have access to more SEL supports tend to value SEL more, which in turn is associated with lower rates of requested expulsions.

Illinois has long been a trailblazer in SEL policy (Zinsser & Dusenbury, 2015) but these policies do not always apply to our youngest learners in community-based programs. Our findings point towards possible ways to diminish expulsion rates and disparities by addressing teachers’ beliefs about SEL and ensuring the equal distribution and use of SEL supports across all types of communities. Additionally, these findings reiterate calls for considering teachers’ own emotional health and workplace well-being as ways to improve children’s early school experiences.
I am currently the Student and Family Services Administrator at a Regional Alternative School where I’ve worked for the past 20 years. During a 34 year professional career in social service, mental health and education, I have gained a tremendous amount of practical experience working with “At Risk” youth as practitioner and administrator. I’ve been trained and/or have provided training in various behavioral management strategies including Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI), Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (NVCI), Trust-Based Relationship Intervention (TBRI) and Restorative Practices (RP). I am a fulltime graduate student at the IIRP and I have attended 5 RP conferences.

The impact of restorative practices implemented at a Regional Alternative school in Bloomington, Illinois were assessed using a mixed methods approach. Participants included 17 students with attendance rates under sixty percent. Student attendance data, observations during restorative circles, and student interviews served as data collection points. Ninety-four percent of the students increased their attendance rates. One hundred percent of the students reported that the restorative practices gave them a voice and an opportunity to discuss their struggles with attendance. Considering the passing of Senate Bill 100, these results suggest restorative practices are an effective strategy for changing student behavior.

Completed Research Study: Restorative Practices Attendance Group
Arts Integration: Establishing Teacher Candidates’ Self-Efficacy when Engaging with the Arts

Michael Vetere, EdD, Associate Professor, Illinois State University

Many teacher candidates who enter teacher education programs have received altered curricula that addressed the new common core of reading, writing, and mathematics (Beveridge 2010). These students who have not been exposed to arts education, are reluctant to engage in the arts and fully participate in an arts education course as part of their teacher preparation (Hallam, Gupta, & Lee, 2008). These teacher candidates exhibit a low level of arts engagement and arts teaching self-efficacy and are therefore less confident with engaging and teaching the arts (Garvis, 2009). The lack of engagement with quality arts experiences in adolescence and university settings may perpetuate the lack of creativity and dedication for creating quality educators who contribute to arts education (Eisner, 2002).

This mixed method research study has examined the role of arts integration courses in the preparation of teacher candidates’ self-efficacy on teaching and engaging in the arts. This study adds to mixed-method research as it relates to self-efficacy and preparing teacher candidates to teach the arts after taking an arts integration course. The findings of this research contribute to the overall effectiveness and reliability of art integration in the classroom. The researcher found that teacher candidates who enter an arts integration course had a wide variety of exposure to the arts from no experience to school curriculum, extra-curricular activities, and community arts experiences. Prior to taking an arts integration course, the students indicated a neutral level of arts self-efficacy. At the conclusion of the semester-long courses on arts integration students’ self-efficacy improved to a positive level of self-efficacy in engaging with and teaching the arts with the greatest change in vicarious experiences.
Assessing the Predictive Validity of an Early Childhood Screening Tool on Preschooler Outcomes

Kisha Jenkins, School Psychology
Loyola University Chicago

Finding that “half of an estimated eight million handicapped youngsters were not receiving appropriate educational services and that one million were excluded entirely from the public school system” (Bershoff, 1977, p. 190), Congress enacted Public Law 94-142, the Education for all Handicapped Children Act (now the Individuals with Disabilities Act) in an attempt to legislatively redress the exclusion of children with disabilities from the educational landscape, and mandate the provision of a free and appropriate education (FAPE). To ensure FAPE, Congress stipulated that school districts must identify children with disabilities and provide special education services. Reauthorization of Public Law 94-142 expanded the responsibility of school districts to provide early intervention services to children with disabilities.

Given increased focus on improving early childhood education and making quality preschool accessible for all (US Department of Education, 2015), the need to identify children at-risk and provide early intervention services is paramount. This is especially true as the number of children determined for eligibility of special education services increases to 10-16% for children age 6 and over (Macy, 2014). These statistics indicate incongruence between the number of children eligible for services and those identified. Highlighting the importance of early childhood identification and intervention, Mercer et al. (1979) proposed that of 50% of children later identified with developmental delays would have had their conditions mitigated if they had participated in early intervention during critical developmental periods, potentially increasing their prognosis for responses to intervention.

Owing to this, standardized screening instruments have emerged as a reliable mechanism for identification (Guevara, 2013). Inasmuch as developmental surveillance is a critical component in developmental screening, research has indicated that developmental monitoring is insufficient independent of standardized measures (Guevara, 2013). Research findings such as these and emphasis on accountability have propelled developmental screening to the forefront. In fact, between 2002 to 2009 pediatricians indicating use of screening tools increased from 23% to 47% (Radecki, Sand-Loud, O’Connor, Sharp, & Olson, 2011).

A popular instrument used for this purpose is the Developmental Indicators of Assessment of Learning-Fourth Edition (DIAL-4). According to the creators, the intent of the DIAL is “to distinguish between children who may be at risk for academic failure and those who are not at risk” (Mardell-Czudnowski & Goldenberg, 2011, p. 5). Previous research validating the predictive validity of the DIAL is fairly limited. There is even less research examining the correlation between pediatric screening tools and outcome measures. The purpose of this study is to examine the predictive validity of the DIAL-4 preschool screening instrument on the academic outcomes of children, as measured by the IGDI assessment tool. The sample comprised 29 four-year old suburban preschool children. Findings indicated no correlation between the DIAL-4 student scores and IGDI scores (r = .294, p = .061). This study augments research on the importance of pediatric screening measures by broadening awareness and highlighting the need for closer scrutiny of early childhood screening tools currently being used in school districts and developmental clinics.
Teacher attitudes and beliefs about math influence their decision-making and practice and thus children’s learning and are linked to their expectations for student outcomes (Stipek et al., 2001; Lee & Ginsburg, 2009; Briley, 2012). Gaining an understanding of teachers’ epistemic beliefs will better guide professional development efforts geared to supporting positive teacher change in practice and thus, student outcomes.

The purpose of this study was to examine the reliability of revisions to the Attitudes, Beliefs, and Confidence in Early Math (ABC-EM) survey tool that is used by the Early Math Collaborative (EMC) at Erikson Institute in their current project, Collaborative Math in Head Start. The revised tool grouped the survey statements into three categories: Confidence in Math Teaching (teaching efficacy), Confidence in my own Math Abilities (self-efficacy), and Beliefs about Math in General (epistemic beliefs).

The initial item-level statistical analysis as well as the category level reliability revealed that the General Beliefs about Math category lacks reliability and strength as a category overall and several items were highly skewed. The findings suggest that the items within the General Beliefs about Math category were not capturing the same construct. One possible explanation is that teachers may self-report beliefs that are not evident in their practice (Pajares, 1992) and social acceptability may influence teacher responses on items related to epistemic beliefs about math. The other two categories showed greater reliability and appear to capture the constructs of teaching efficacy and self-efficacy.

Capturing epistemic beliefs might be better accomplished through mixed methods; using a survey as well as other qualitative approaches such as open-ended interviews, responses to dilemmas/vignettes, and observations (Pajares, 2012). The study as a whole uses all of these methods, thus triangulating data among measures may better capture teacher beliefs and allow professional development efforts to be more targeted and intentional.
This pilot study investigated the successes and challenges of *Collaborative Math*, a professional development program with the goal of helping early childhood centers become centers of excellence in mathematics where quality early math instruction is fostered, celebrated, and sustained. Prior research has found that in order to be effective and sustainable, professional development should include all teaching staff and administration, thus creating a supportive environment for innovation. Three Chicago Head Start Centers participated in a condensed version of *Collaborative Math* including learning labs and group coaching for teachers, leadership academies and consultation for directors, and math activities and resources for families. Data was collected in the form of coach’s logs, interviews with individual directors and teachers, and focus groups with families. Analysis uncovered successes including development of shared language and experience around mathematics among center staff, as well as fostering expertise, knowledge, and confidence in instructional leaders. Families enjoyed engaging with their children around math and learning what occurred in school, but found busy schedules to be a barrier. Additional challenges for centers include the complexity of leadership roles and logistics, including limited time and capacity, which prevent leaders from coaching their teachers around mathematics. Teachers also struggle to secure time to collaborate with colleagues. Implications for full implementation in Fall 2016 include reconsidering the responsibilities of leaders, balancing the quality and quantity of learning labs, and using e-mail and text to engage families.
The purpose of this study was to investigate how Central Illinois preschool teachers implemented multicultural education in their classrooms. The guiding questions of the research study focused on teachers' understanding of diversity and multicultural education. There were two theoretical frameworks used in this study. One was Paine's (1989) ideas regarding teachers' understanding of diversity. The second theory was Banks (1993) and McIntosh’s (2000) levels of multicultural education implementation. The technique that was used for this research study was qualitative research, which is often used to answer questions regarding complex phenomena from the participants' detailed viewpoint (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). The specific qualitative method employed was grounded theory, which is an investigative research method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glesne, 1999). Over the 12-week research study the participants were observed and provided feedback in a variety of formats. Additionally the participated in two interviews, two focus groups, and two independent written reflections. The findings from this study add to the limited scholarship regarding multicultural implementation in preschool settings with the ever-changing student demographics, along with teacher evaluation methods during a time of increased accountability. The researcher found three themes after data analysis. The participants had a tendency to avoid conversations or interactions with students focused on multicultural topics, there was an ineffective support system from the administration, and the participants had a lack of knowledge (training and education) in regards to multicultural education. Overall, developing educators into individuals who can effectively implement multicultural curriculum is essential to the academic success and social emotional development of all students.
The Importance of Studying a Relationship-Based Early Intervention Model

Aimee Hildado, PhD, Assistant Professor, Social Work, Northeastern Illinois University
and Manager, RefugeeOne's Wellness Program

Patricia Garcia-Arena, PhD, Principal Researcher, American Institutes for Research

Shauna Ejeh, Executive Director
Claudia Quigg, Founding Executive Director, retired
Baby TALK, Inc.

There is a rich theoretical, clinical, and research base demonstrates the importance of investing in supportive early childhood experiences to enhance positive child development, particularly for low-income, minority, and other at-risk populations. Moreover, research on services provided to at-risk populations helps practitioners understand what specific resources and approaches are most impactful in helping these hard-to-reach families thrive.

Our poster presentation examines a community-based early intervention model that has been used in the field for 30 years; a model employing an innovative relationship-based approach to screening, serving and retaining families. It is the model's relationship-based approach – a core element of the model framework – that has been associated with success in identifying needs and risk among hard-to-reach families, increased parent engagement in intervention services and longer retention rates when families are working with professionals trained in the respective model. To gain a deeper understanding of the model's unique relational approach, two separate research teams completed two randomized controlled trials. The teams studied two different service components of the model – home visiting and newborn screeners in hospital obstetric units – that both employ the same strength-based relationship-focused engagement approach. In doing so, both studies learned a number of critical lessons on the importance of the professional-parent/child/family relationship and its influence on parental stress levels, parent-child interaction levels, developmental outcomes for children and even parent competence and help-seeking behaviors that impact the entire family unit.

The poster will share findings from the two studies along with best practices for engaging vulnerable families with young children. It will also illustrate the role of research in informing best practices and research designs for studying hard-to-reach families. Finally and as it was made evident early on in the research studies that it is necessary for the service providers to build trust with families to ensure these families benefit from the early intervention services, this poster will highlight how a strong relationship-approach improves services for families and the specific model strategies that can support greater success for practitioners working with at-risk, diverse families in the field.
Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and First Grade Teachers Self Reporting Practices for Read Alouds in the Classroom

Megan McCaffrey, PhD, Assistant Professor,
Katy Hisrich, PhD, Assistant Professor
Governors State University

A current gap in research exists pertaining to pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade teachers’ beliefs, and practices of read alouds in a single study. Responding to this need, our research considers pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and first-grade teachers self-reporting beliefs, and practices toward read aloud time with students.

The methodology consists of emailing our Survey Monkey survey link to pre-kindergarten through first grade teachers in Illinois. Email addresses were requested from the Illinois School Board of Education (ISBE) and sent out during June and July 2016. The survey audience targets Illinois teachers currently teaching and certified or who have taught these grades in the recent past. The survey consists of 36 questions covering eight focus areas: Demographic Data, Educational and Work Data, General Read-Aloud Information, Preparation of Read-Alouds, Conducting Read-Alouds, Books for Read-Alouds, Access to Read-Aloud Books, and Training and Professional Development. There is an open eight week window in which surveys can be completed and data gathered. Self-reporting surveys have limitations of accuracy due to inaccurate self-reporting which can be caused by recall bias, social desirability bias and errors in self-observation. The benefits of a self-reporting survey include cost and ease of distribution.

Results of this survey provide a beginning step toward evaluating the ways in which pre-kindergarten through first grade school teachers prepare and use read-alouds in the classroom. In 1985 Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading (National Academy of Education., & Anderson, R. C.) stated that read alouds are “the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading.” Notwithstanding this affirmation some teachers do not read aloud to their students’ routinely or do not fully utilize the instructional opportunities offered by this practice. Read alouds are “the single most important activity” because they offer numerous literacy benefits in an engaging activity. Data gathered will determine areas that would benefit from professional development and webinars addressing each area of need plan to be created.
Stellar Girls Summer STEM Camp: Expanding Stellar Girls
Karen Lindebrekke, Director of Programs
Matt Feldmann, PhD, Owner and Principal Investigator
Ann Reed Vogel, Senior Vice President

The Stellar Girls program was created in 2011 by the iBIO Institute EDUCATE center, with funding by Astellas USA Foundation, to inspire young women to enter into science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) careers. Stellar Girls introduces 3rd–8th grade girls to current, interesting, “Big Ideas” in STEM fields. Stellar Girls activities incorporate Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS Lead States, 2013) and Common Core State Standards (CCSS, 2012). Activities are woven into lessons that provide authentic problem contexts and student-centered investigations. Through these learning experiences, students develop hands-on investigation and problem-solving skills, deepen core content knowledge, and realize the connections of crosscutting concepts among various disciplines.

During the 2016 summer, Astellas USA Foundation was joined by Abbott Laboratories to provide five-day summer camps at two sites in Illinois, in Red Bud and Waukegan. The camps build upon the success of the Stellar Girls after-school program and allow EDUCATE to extend the benefit of informal STEM programming to girls who are unable to participate in a Stellar Girls or similar program during the school year. The program activities consisted of hands-on learning, field trips, and engagement with STEM industry and community professionals. Students celebrated their exploration of STEM concepts by sharing what they learned with parents and other community members on the last day of camp.

The goals of the camp were to improve girls’ curiosity and self-efficacy in science, and to build students’ awareness of exciting careers in STEM-based industries, which informed the evaluation/research questions. The research questions were investigated through the use of a pre- and post-program survey and daily reflective surveys.

The pre- and post-program survey included six questions from the Test of Science Related Attitudes (Fraser, 1981) to establish interest in science and the Draw a Scientist approach (Chambers, 1983) to identify changing attitudes and potential self-efficacy with science. The science career familiarity questions were developed locally through an understanding for what careers students would learn about during each of the camp experiences. Students increased their interest in science as a result of their involvement with the summer camp. They had a particular high rating for “science lessons are fun,” and they also indicated that they had a significantly better understanding for 23 of 25 of the science careers.

The daily instrument focused on narrative response to five questions: three reflective questions on their learning and two three-point Likert scale items about program quality. The average ratings were at or above 2.6 (on a 3.0 scale) every day.

In addition to the methods and results of the project evaluation, the poster presentation will include specifics on learning activities, volunteer engagement and STEM-career exposure at each of the very different camp locations.

1 iBios Institute Education Center
2 Goshen Education Consulting, Inc.
Digital East St. Louis is a National Science Foundation funded program offering information technology (IT) and computing experiences via the digital humanities to underserved urban middle-school youth in an out-of-school setting. Through this place-based program, students create, design, discover, collaborate, and solve problems by exploring, mapping, and sharing the cultural and environmental history of their East St. Louis community. They co-construct knowledge with other community members and with the guidance of scientists, mathematicians, historians, urban scholars, and teachers, ultimately creating a rich digital resource that will be a valuable tool for educators and scholars. The program partners include Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) faculty and staff in STEM, digital humanities, history, and Black studies, as well as teachers from the East St. Louis area. Through Digital East St. Louis, we have the opportunity to develop and test a model for urban place-based learning with the goal of motivating and helping to prepare minority middle-grade students to pursue STEM education and career pathways.

In this three-year project we are developing and implementing a curriculum for urban youth that is student-focused, relevant, and integrates principles of place-based learning. The program emphasizes students engaging with community stakeholders in the co-creation of the Digital East St. Louis resouce - eaststlouisculture.org. As a key part of this design and development project, we are conducting a research study utilizing a concurrent mixed methods approach to explore its impact on the participants. Using a seven-point scale survey (from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree) created by the research team, we are measuring the perceptions of program participants in four subscales: community, technology, education/career, and digital humanities. To complement this quantitative data, we are also conducting semi-structured interviews with program participants. We hypothesize that urban place-based learning will increase students' abilities to express understandings and perceptions of community from various perspectives, increase student self-efficacy and competence in using specialized technology tools, expand awareness of the diversity of IT and computing careers, and lead to behaviors that support successful entry into STEM educational pathways.

Analysis of the latest student pre-/post-surveys (Summer 2016) showed an increase in the means of all four subscales, with a significant increase in the technology subscale, $t (13) = 4.88, p < 0.001$. Furthermore, significant positive correlations were found between participants' attendance in the program and changes in their technology subscale scores. In looking at results by gender, males showed a greater increase than females in the areas of community, technology, and digital humanities, although females also showed an increase in education/career. During interviews, students reported learning more about their community, including its history and culture, and developing a sense of pride in East St. Louis. Students also described gaining competence with technology tools used in the program (e.g., Omeka, Google Drive, Audacity) and planned to use these tools outside of the program.

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1 The Center for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Research, Education, and Outreach, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

2 Hezel Associates, LLC
Bullying In Middle School: Perceptions and Interventions of Middle School Support Staff

Natashia Cunningham-Harris, EdD

When Olweus (1984) began his work with bullying in the early 1970’s, few administrators recognized it as more than a rite of passage. However, as the incidents become more and more brutal and responses to bullying evoke suicides and school killings, politicians and educators are beginning to take notice. Still, bullying is increasing in schools in part due to the lack of consistent consequences and training.

Adult intervention is imperative to reduce bullying. Until this time, school support staff has been largely disregarded as important tools in reducing bullying. However, school support staff are more likely to be present when bullying occurs since school bus drivers, paraprofessionals, playground supervisors, crossing guards and others are often where bullying occurs most (i.e., recess, the lunchroom, the bus). This paper seeks to determine whether middle school support staff is responsive to bullying situations in the schools where they work and what if anything they have done to prevent or intervene in bullying activity.

The researcher used the Colorado Trust Bullying Prevention Initiative Staff Questionnaire (CTBPS) to survey 72 support staff in the Chicago area schools and then conducted personal interviews with 15 support staff to record more personal answers about school policy and their role in preventing and intervening with bullying.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the researcher found that middle school support staff lacks training and knowledge to deal with bullying. Although they witness bullying events, they deal with them inconsistently and fail to report all incidents to superiors. Most middle school support staff are, however, willing to aid in implementing school-wide anti-bullying policies.
The Language Use of Bilingual Korean Students in a Korean Heritage Classroom

Chaehyun Lee, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Many Korean parents in the U. S. send their children to heritage Korean language schools so that they don’t lose Korean and Korean identity as they acquire English. Yet, the extent to which young Korean students enrolled in Korean heritage programs develop their heritage language proficiency is a topic that rarely has been investigated. The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate first-grade emergent Korean bilingual students’ language use (Korean, English, and code-switching) in a Korean heritage classroom. The study investigates the following questions: (1) How did the Korean emergent bilingual students orally use Korean and English to participate in the book discussions? (2) To what extent were there differences in the two groups of students’ (Korean-American vs. Korean immigrant) use of code-switching in their oral responses to Korean children’s literature? The paper shows different patterns in language use between the two groups of Korean children. Unlike Korean immigrant students, Korean-American students presented their extensive use of code-mixing by inserting English words and phrases in their Korean sentences. The findings show that young emergent bilinguals are able to utilize their language and linguistic resources in both their languages and suggest that teachers can strategically use CS to make their instruction comprehensible and to encourage students’ participation in the target language.
Using Teacher Candidates’ Self-Perceptions of Competence to Prepare for a High Stakes Licensure Examination

Stephen Marlette, PhD, Associate Professor, Teaching and Learning
Brian Johnson, PhD, Assistant Professor, Teaching and Learning
Barbara Martin, PhD, Assistant Professor, Teaching and Learning
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

The edTPA Elementary Literacy Assessment is a performance examination completed during student teaching that Illinois preservice teachers must pass for licensure. This poster session shares the results from a pilot study instrument designed to identify elementary teacher candidate perceived edTPA competence prior to exam submission. The development of this instrument was grounded in the idea that metacognition about an instructional task can foster teacher candidates’ knowledge strengths and weaknesses and empowerment to control their learning. The instrument was administered in the Fall of 2015 to seventy-six elementary teacher candidates in their senior year attending a university located in a Midwest metropolitan area. Pearson correlation was used to establish whether there was a relationship between teacher candidate’s perceived level of competence in completing the edTPA and their actual performance score. As a work in progress, presenters will share the results of this study and ideas regarding the benefits and limitations of using teacher candidate self-perception data.
According to Annoyance Theatre founder and artistic director Napier (2004), “Improvisation is getting on stage and making stuff up as you go along” (p. 1). Offstage, improv tenets and approaches have documented uses in areas of adult and higher education, such as in community college courses (Sullivan, 2010), graduate business curricula (Huffaker & West, 2005), and workplace learning (Bernard & Short, 2012; Koppett, 2001).

A predominant amount of improv texts serve as “how-to guides” for performing improvisation (Halpern, Close, & Johnson, 1994; Napier, 2004; Salinsky & Frances-White, 2010; Scruggs & Gellman, 2008; Spolin, 1999), and training centers, such as The Annoyance Theatre and Bar, iO, and The Second City (Salinsky & Frances-White, 2010), instruct improvisers on the methods and strategies related to improvisational theater. However, some improvisers not only use their training onstage but also employ it in workplace learning and related areas. As such, workplace learning and company trainings provide a significant revenue source for improv organizations (Quintanilla, 1999). This raises a question: How does an improv performer make the transition from performer to educator in workplace learning? The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of trained improviser facilitators who utilized improvisational strategies in corporate training and development programs.

Practitioners wrote about why and how to incorporate improvisation in business and other adult learning settings. However, limited research exists on programs, guidelines, or policies surrounding this group becoming educators and how they develop, implement, and evaluate training programs. In addressing this gap, I use a basic interpretive qualitative approach to answer the following research questions: 1.) What are the experiences of improvisational professionals engaged in corporate training and development programs?, and 2.) In what ways do improvisational trainers describe the process of developing, implementing, and evaluating corporate training and development programs?

Sixteen participants participated in this study. Data collection included interviews averaging 70–75 minutes in length, responses to reflective writings prompt, and artifact collection. I employed open coding, axial coding, and focused coding to identify emerging themes. I employed three techniques to enhance trustworthiness: member checking, employing an outside auditor, and developing an audit trail.

Results from this study provide insight into improviser performers’ development into educators of knowledge in business. Results also focus on improv facilitators’ approaches to fostering innovative experiences and learning in business training workshops. The findings addressed the research questions by capturing the improvisers’ experiences developing as facilitators and integrating improv in corporate training and development. The major themes included: 1) improvisers’ journeys in merging improv in corporate training and development are ambiguous but rigorous, and 2) improv facilitators connect improv tenets to learning to meet business needs in corporate training and development.

Informal adult learning institutions may draw from this study to better understand practitioners turned educator’s learning processes and the trainer’s role, decision making, program planning, program implementation, and program evaluation. This study also adds to the body of knowledge on innovative techniques to enhance information delivery. As facilitation is a form of education, training departments and teachers in formal education may also find the approaches and strategies that improvisers employ transferable to their practice and useful in their own development. This study guides adult and higher education practice in that educators may draw from methods employed by the improv facilitators in educator development and integration of improvisational strategies into curriculum.
Charter School Typology

Molly Galloway, Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership
Leah Peoples, Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

One of the most controversial topics in education are debates about charter schools and the extent to which they provide equal educational opportunities. Reference to charter schools as a new civil rights issue highlights how problematic segregation and disproportionate educational outcomes are in the 21st century (Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2009). However, research on charter schools remains largely inconsistent. This inconsistency might be a result of conceptualizing charter schools as a monolithic group. This research aims to move away from the monolithic treatment of charter schools by (a) developing a charter typology and (b) determining whether the typology can explain differences across contradictory charter school claims.
The University of Illinois at Chicago EdD program for urban school leaders has developed the Leadership Development Plan Manual for use by aspiring principals and their leadership coaches. Our program has for some time emphasized self/personal development of candidates and has recognized the importance of strong “learning-orientations” in leadership development. However, we have only recently codified implications for our program and practices in artifacts such as the manual. The manual is a set of tools, protocols, and routines designed to support the mutual engagement of aspiring principal residents, leadership coaches, and their mentor principals in ongoing iterative leadership planning to accelerate leadership learning in the residency year.

The manual was implemented with a cohort of 18 aspiring principals in 2015-2016. We conducted in-depth interviews with most cohort members about their leadership development planning experiences at the end of the residency year. This poster uses a case study methodology of four aspiring principals to address two research questions:

- How does engagement in leadership development planning during the residency year support and develop aspiring principals’ capacity for self-regulated learning?

- What factors facilitate and impede engagement in leadership development planning?

Evidence suggests that aspiring principals who engage extensively in leadership development planning do so because they understand the connections between their goals and plans, the actual work in their school site, and their ongoing learning as leaders responsible for the progress of the work. Findings highlight critical influences on this process, including the role of the leadership coach, individual characteristics of the aspiring principals, and factors in the residency site.

The recent Illinois School Leadership Advisory Council recommends improving principal preparation programs by further aligning partnership activities, including internships, with program standards and competencies. The development and piloting of UIC’s Leadership Development Plan Manual, and efforts to learn from the initiative, constitute a major effort on UIC’s part to further cohere strategies used to ensure that residents develop the standards-based competencies that have been identified by the state as most contributing to leadership capacity.
Among the aims of policy reform in contemporary school leader preparation is to assure that early career leaders are placed and retained in high needs schools, requiring well specified and accurate placement and retention metrics. The UIC Center for Urban Education Leadership tracks the full career trajectories of program participants who complete the pre-service portion of the program satisfactorily, which involves both coursework, and a clinical residency placement in an urban school setting. The employment data we collect is used to study trends in placement, performance, and persistence in UIC-led urban schools to ensure we are placing the most qualified school leaders in the highest need urban schools, and to inform continuous program improvement. The aim of this poster is to name and discuss the range of challenges posed by tracking placement and retention metrics, and illustrate how such metrics currently are derived and used within one highly regarded principal preparation program in Chicago. Discussion will include how these metrics are used to query to what extent the program is meeting its core mission to urban schools.
Given the current fiscal environment in higher education, programs must justify their existence, or risk being cut. Jeopardized programs include summer bridge programs (SBP’s) which can provide at risk students the chance at a college degree. In this study we examined the self-efficacy beliefs of 322 students at a Midwestern teaching institution, and compared beliefs among program participants ($n = 23$) and non-participants ($n = 299$). Statistical analyses revealed no significant difference between the two groups. However, the two groups were different in what they felt most and least efficacious about. Further, qualitative analysis was also undertaken in the form of guided interviews with volunteer participants. Through these interviews, common themes were found that revealed a positive impact on the self-efficacy beliefs of participants. These impacts revolved around the socialization of the participants through their interactions with faculty, staff, and other students to make them feel more confident about their own academic abilities. Therefore, we conclude that SBP’s may need to rely more heavily on qualitative measures in order to more thoroughly justify their existence.
This study examined the role students’ knowledge of research methods plays in refining their beliefs about knowledge and knowing. More specifically, this study investigated whether reflecting and reporting on one’s own beliefs would facilitate a change in students’ epistemological beliefs, and if this change differs as a function of one’s knowledge of research methods. Students, from a research methods and cognitive processes class, took the epistemological belief survey at three different times (first-day, before the reflective writing task, and after the reflective writing task) during a semester. For each item on the survey, students rated their agreement with the statement about their epistemological beliefs on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree; 5=Strongly Agree). Student-responses from the first day served as a baseline while the survey responses before the reflective writing task served as the pre-test and those after the writing task as the post-test responses. Participants’ average score on items related to five beliefs about knowledge (Speed of knowledge acquisition, Structure of knowledge), and learning (Knowledge construction and modification, Qualities of a successful student, and Attainability of objective truth) were calculated each time. After equating the students on their baseline belief scores, we found that only research methods students showed a change in their beliefs after a reflective writing task. However, the change was only noticed in their beliefs about the structure of the knowledge. No other findings were significant. Our findings suggest that reflecting on one’s epistemological beliefs may help one refine it; however, a minimum level of background in research methods seems to be a prerequisite for this activity to help.
One consequence of the significant increase in non-tenure track (NTT) faculty appointments at research universities in recent decades is NTT faculty unionization. As the share of tenure-line faculty at U.S. higher education institutions has essentially flipped, from almost four-fifths of all faculty in 1969 to about one-third of academic appointments in 2009, institutional policies are still adapting to these changes. This shift in faculty structure has prompted a wave of NTT faculty unionizations, including at private research universities. NTT faculty recently voted to unionize at several such institutions, including the University of Chicago and Duke University. Recent changes in collective bargaining law, combined with a growing reliance on NTT faculty at higher education institutions, make the professionalization and support of NTT faculty increasingly relevant to research university administrators.

This study examines policies at a sample of six research universities, all U.S.-based members of the American Association of Universities, to explore how research universities support and professionalize their full-time, NTT instructional faculty. The study also considers the influence of NTT faculty unions on the development of these policies, based on policy document analysis and interview data. Six institutions were selected for policy document analysis, including three whose NTT faculty are unionized and three that are not unionized. Faculty handbooks, collective bargaining agreements (CBAs), and other policy documents were collected and coded for the presence of institutional, NTT faculty-supportive policies. One unionized and one non-unionized institution were selected as sites for interviews with faculty and administrators.

Several key findings emerged from the document analysis and interview data, including:

- **CBAs as a policy source.** The document analysis revealed that CBAs are a significant source of NTT faculty-supportive policies. In some policy areas, all three CBAs addressed an area that was not addressed in any of the institutional policies of the non-unionized institutions.

- **Union grievance process.** NTT faculty at the unionized institution consistently referred to the CBA grievance procedure as an important procedural safeguard against arbitrary administrative acts towards a NTT faculty member. CBA grievance procedures generally applied to a broader range of contract termination and non-renewal disputes than did handbook procedures.

- **Factors influencing unionization.** Sustained effort of union organizers was a factor at the unionized institution whereas the absence of a critical mass of NTT faculty and perceptions of job security explained the lack of interest in unionization at the non-unionized institution.

Although unions can impede NTT faculty inclusion, the study demonstrates that unions also promote the development of strong policies and provide a check against arbitrary administrative action. These findings do not resolve ongoing controversy over NTT faculty unions, but rather identify the potential advantages as well as limitations of unionization.
Common Core State Standards in the Chicago Public Schools: Teachers’ and Administrators’ Experiences Implementing the New Standards

Julia Gwynne, PhD, Managing Director and Senior Research Scientist,
Jennifer Cowhey, Research Analyst
University of Chicago Consortium on School Research

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are one of the most significant educational initiatives in the last decade. Aimed at addressing persistently low levels of student achievement in the United States, the CCSS identify the set of skills that students need at each grade level to ensure they are on a path toward college and career readiness. For many states, including Illinois, the new standards are significantly more rigorous and demanding than the previous standards. This has meant that many teachers must change their instructional practices so that their teaching is aligned with the goals of the new standards. In a large district like the Chicago Public Schools (CPS), providing training on the new standards to a workforce of more than 10 thousand teachers in over 600 schools has been an enormous endeavor.

The success of any education reform depends on many factors. A critical component is whether school staff are supportive of the initiative and view it as likely to improve educational outcomes. Equally important is whether school staff have the training they need to ensure their practice is aligned with the goals of the initiative. CPS has been preparing to implement the standards since 2011-12. Teachers were expected to teach the new English and Language Arts (ELA) standards by 2013-14 and the new math standards one year later, in 2014-15. This report describes teachers’ and administrator’s experiences preparing for this transition using survey responses from the spring of 2014 and 2015. Survey questions focused on four areas: Attitudes about the kind of impact the new standards will have and how challenging they are; experiences with formal training on the new standards; opportunities outside of formal training to learn about the new standards; and how prepared teachers feel to teach the new standards.

Many teachers, especially at the elementary level, are optimistic that the new standards will have a great deal of impact on teaching and learning. Although professional development around the new standards has been somewhat limited, there was a considerable increase between 2014 and 2015 in the percent of teachers, particularly at the elementary level, who felt very prepared to teach the standards. Of course, changing teacher practice is not easy and ongoing support of teachers is likely to play a critical role in ensuring that teachers’ increased familiarity and comfort with the standards ultimately translates into improved teaching and learning. High school staff, in particular, may need ongoing support as they work to increase their familiarity and comfort with the new standards.
There has been a call to increase the number of school leaders who are sensitive to the needs of English Learners (ELs). According to Hamayan & Freeman-Field (2012), school administrators must pay attention to the difficulties that immigrant students face in schools. Zacarian (2011) states that in order “to advocate for the best program and to support their teachers, school leaders need to understand their EL populations very well from a cultural and linguistic perspective…that they come from diverse backgrounds, and have varying degrees of school readiness” (p. 9-10). These calls are in response to the vast majority of school leaders not having any experiences or training in working with ELs (Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Hamayan & Field-Freeman, 2012).

To end this disparity, as part of Project DREAMS at NIU, funded through the U.S. Department of Education for 5 years, we created a four-day, 32 hour intensive summer academy specifically for ten PK-12 school leaders in rural and suburban school districts in order to introduce them to ELs: a) State and federal laws pertaining to ELs; b) Second language acquisition, cultural awareness, and communication with families; and c) Best practices for all types of bilingual/ESL settings. After the summer academy, the participants returned in October to the NIU campus in order to present how they have infused this new knowledge into their school practices, belief systems, and culture. We then followed up with a formal interview a few months later to see “where they are” in regards to the progress of the changes made at the programmatic and systemic levels. In Spring, we made school and classroom visits and provided feedback to the school leaders. Our research data include exit surveys, interviews, and observation reports.
Navigating Contested Spaces: Principals Leading for Social Justice in an Urban High School

Jason Swanson, PhD, Visiting Research Specialist, Center for Urban Education Leadership
Samuel Whalen, PhD, Director of Research, Center for Urban Education Leadership
University of Illinois at Chicago

This empirical study explores how two consecutive principals of color with dissimilar backgrounds, from the same principal preparation program, were able to enact leadership for social justice at the same school. Although each principal had different approaches to advancing equity, both were able to make progress in improving student achievement, restructuring the school, and improving the culture and climate. The leadership moves of the principals are situated within the contested urban context of Chicago.
The edTPA Mandate in Illinois: A Tale of Two Institutions

Craig De Voto, Research Assistant, Center for Urban Education Leadership, University of Illinois at Chicago

Over the past two years, the edTPA has taken states by storm; three-quarters are now implementing, or in the process of implementing, this test (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2015a). However, such a rapid assimilation has not been without concerns. Institutions of higher education (IHEs) and teacher preparation programs (TPPs) nationwide—including those in Illinois—have hastily had to adjust their programs in order to comply with these new mandates. What’s more, the impact of such a rigorous, standardized teacher performance assessment for higher education and TPPs still remains unclear (Sawchuk, 2013). Consequently, this research aimed to examine these gaps.

Specifically, this study sought to examine how policy adoption conditions (e.g. high-stakes), local resources, and organizational readiness (on behalf of IHEs) influence edTPA tractability, as well as the perceptions and actions exhibited by TPP faculty, staff, and those they serve (i.e pre-service teachers).

The study’s framework centered on two literature bases: 1) policy implementation (i.e. McLaughlin, 1987; Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1980; Weatherley & Lipsky, 1977; Weiner, 2009); and 2) organizational theory (i.e. Coburn, 2005; Cyert & March, 1963; Fusarelli, 2002; Janis, 1982; Lipsky, 1980; Weick, 1976).

A multiple, embedded case study design was employed (Yin, 2013). Illinois served as the overarching case state, whereas two contrasting IHEs served as the embedded cases. One site, Jefferson University, could be described as a large (over 20,000), public, resource-deficient, loosely coupled, ethnically diverse institution. Conversely, the other site, Hamilton University, is a smaller (less than 20,000), private, resource-affluent, tightly coupled, ethnically homogeneous (i.e. predominantly female, white, middle class) institution.

Illinois was chosen because of its atypical adoption conditions and the extent to which it has impacted TPPs thus far. As of fall 2015, all Illinois teacher candidates must pass the edTPA in order to receive licensure. Flyvberg (2006) and Glaser and Strauss (1967) argue such atypical cases often yield richer data, thereby illuminating the phenomena observed.

22 semi-structured interviews, ranging from 15 to 90 minutes were conducted across the two case sites. Additionally, two focus groups with pre-service teachers were conducted—one at each respective institution.

Analysis was conducted utilizing grounded theory, a “general method of comparative analysis” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 1) that produces ‘core categories’ or ‘concepts’ rooted in the data collected (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In the process, three such categories were garnered: ‘time suckage’, ‘messiah-ing’, and ‘polarization’.

In many ways, edTPA implementation efforts taken by both Illinois TPPs became a ‘tale of two institutions’. Jefferson, in the face of limited resources, a more challenging student population, and further behavioral change, exemplified great resistance to the edTPA mandate, beginning with staff and trickling down to pre-service teachers. On the other hand, Hamilton, with an abundance of resources, organizational capacity, and a gifted student population, became a theoretical model of effective edTPA policy tractability; overwhelming buy-in was exhibited by across all actors.
Illinois reforms have targeted quality assurance of teacher preparation programs through mandating of a pre-service teacher performance assessment (edTPA) as a licensure requirement as of September 2015. At the current infancy of edTPA's implementation, it is essential for research to explore its impact. Our research investigates how edTPA's implementation has impacted a successful teacher preparation program (100% pass rate on elementary literacy edTPA/50.0 mean score), how pre-service and in-service teachers perceive the process of completing the edTPA in terms of preparedness, and what impact, if any, the edTPA licensure requirement has had on teacher efficacy.

Using a sociopolitical lens (Nieto, 1996) and research on performance assessments (Darling-Hammond, 2012; Cochran-Smith, M., Piazza, P., & Power, C., 2013; Denton, 2013), we have considered ways in which the edTPA is working to change the field of education with particular interest in whether it achieves its goal of assuring better quality teachers. We used qualitative methods for our study. During 2013-2016, data was collected from pre-service teachers during and after their practice edTPA experience, after their full edTPA experience, and a year after taking the edTPA and entering the teaching field. Institutional program changes influenced by edTPA implementation were also recorded. Methods included anonymous surveys, phone interviews and written interviews. Conclusions indicated:

1. The Elementary Literacy edTPA reported negative implications on time re-allocations in coursework, though it provided some benefits based on its emphasis on reflection and analysis. Analysis of student assessment and teaching practice emerged as benefits of the edTPA process.

2. The practice and full edTPA experience had a generally positive impact on pre-service teachers’ perceptions of preparedness and a negative impact on authentic teaching and stress management.

3. Ongoing studies of student achievement subsequent to the edTPA requirement need to be implemented to adequately measure impact, but candidates who completed teaching after edTPA reported it increased teaching efficacy but were not in favor of it as a licensure requirement.
Faulty from a small Midwestern university initiated and continue to collect data for a qualitative study of the initial implementation of the edTPA, the new teacher performance-based assessment now required by a number of states for attainment of initial licensure. The data collection began in the spring of 2015 (just prior to the assessment becoming consequential), and continued through spring of 2016 (latest data to be included in findings). The first semester (spring 2015) participants included thirteen teacher candidates, both elementary and secondary, three cooperating teachers, and three university supervisors. The second semester (fall 2015) included six teacher candidates, while spring of 2016 included six additional teacher candidates as participants. The initial research questions for this project are as follows:

• In what ways do you think this experience (preparing for and completing the edTPA) has impacted your reflective practices and your abilities as a beginning teacher?

• In what ways would you describe your perceptions of the edTPA as an assessment tool, in terms of program preparation, structure of the teacher education curriculum, and ultimately, official completion of the assessment?

The overall goals for the project include:

• To engage participants in meaningful conversations that assist in establishing a more positive and supportive environment within the department concerning edTPA -

• To solicit feedback from participants in order to make data-driven modifications in the program that will result in improved candidate success with the edTPA -

• To highlight the voices of the various participants in an effort to better understand the dynamics of the student teaching triad as it relates to implementation of the edTPA -

A qualitative, semi-structured interview approach was decided upon as a means of gathering information from our small numbers and also provided the opportunity for constructive conversations, while allowing for flexibility needed within the interview protocol (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). These thirty to forty-five minute interviews were conducted in a face-to-face and/or Skype audio recorded setting. Following the transcription of the voice files and faculty analysis, we used a general inductive approach (Thomas, 2006) to allow for emergence of different themes. In discussing this general approach, Thomas (2006) states that “The primary purpose of the inductive approach is to allow the research findings to emerge from the…significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies.” (p.238). Themes that arose from transcript analysis include: 1) benefits and challenges of implementing the edTPA; 2) the perceived impact upon the student teaching experience; 3) impact of edTPA on candidates as beginning professionals, and; 4) suggestions for program changes. We have already implemented changes in our program, based largely on the suggestions and comments gleaned from our interviews. It is clear that, as of our third semester of collecting data, said changes have been viewed by the candidates in a positive light. Furthermore, it is our belief that our findings have the potential to inform other teacher preparation programs across the state and contribute to the growing research base concerning the edTPA.
The Effects of Universally Eligible Scholarship Programs on Postsecondary Readiness and Course Taking Behavior

Bradley Hemenway, Education Policy, Organization, & Leadership
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

This research examines how students respond to a universally eligible scholarship program located in Blue Mound, Illinois. The Dell and Evelyn Carroll Scholarship (Carroll Scholarship) awards aid to cover tuition expenses at Richland Community College (RCC) for all Meridian High School graduates. The Carroll Scholarship serves as a method for early information on postsecondary affordability because all graduates, irrespective of income or merit, are awarded the full value of unmet financial need. The new confidence in affordability will ideally stimulate college going decisions and curricular choices for eligible students. Programs with universal eligibility have a growing presence across the country and the State of Illinois, yet to date relatively little research assesses outcomes from these programs and no research focuses on individual programs in Illinois (Hemenway, 2015).

This research utilizes a panel dataset of 1,840 traditional aged RCC students from 14 in-district high schools. The dataset covers the Fall 2010 through Summer 2016 academic semesters to include students from before and after the Carroll Scholarship announcement. Using a quantitative, quasi-experimental Difference-in-Difference research design, I ask three primary research questions: What differences exist in college readiness after the introduction of the universally eligible Carroll scholarship? How has the universally eligible Carroll scholarship program altered postsecondary curricular choices? How does the universally eligible Carroll scholarship program alter credential-earning aspirations at Richland Community College?

The research follows Perna’s (2005) college choice conceptual framework to describe how students receive information and context on postsecondary accessibility and affordability. I hypothesize that after the Carroll Scholarship announcement Meridian students who enroll at RCC will exhibit reduced measures of college readiness. This will be the result of an increase in enrollment by students who previously perceived college as an unaffordable alternative. I believe that the value of the Carroll Scholarship will stimulate increased credit-taking behavior among Meridian students, however they will be less likely to successfully complete their courses because of college readiness issues. Lastly, I expect that eligible students will elect to follow a shorter curricular path to lessen the overall time to postsecondary completion.

The preliminary findings of my research demonstrate that the Carroll Scholarship has an influential effect on Meridian students, relative to students from other in-district high schools and Meridian students who graduated prior to the Carroll announcement. I find evidence that eligible scholarship recipients alter their high school course taking decisions. While enrolled at RCC, scholarship recipients earn more total credit hours and are more successful in completing their first-year coursework. Finally, post-Carroll Scholarship enrollees are more likely to follow a degree path, either a transfer four-year transfer curriculum or Associates Degree curriculum.
Variation in the Impact of High School Environment on College Applications

Drew Anderson, PhD, Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Janet Holt, PhD, Executive Director, Illinois Education Research Council

High school graduates face several barriers to enrolling in college and potentially accessing the significant benefits of a college degree. These barriers include lack of academic preparation, unmet financial need, rising college prices, and lack of knowledge to navigate the application and enrollment process. Multiple interventions exist to address these barriers after students leave high school, and have achieved varying degrees of success. These include remedial courses, need-based financial aid, and targeted messaging campaigns. However high schools themselves also have the potential to identify and address barriers to college enrollment.

This study estimates the variance across high schools in effectiveness of getting students to apply for college, conditional on student characteristics a year before graduation. As a measure of college application, we focus on whether students file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), do so early enough to qualify for all available state aid, and send the application to high quality colleges. We estimate these effects within all graduates from Illinois public high schools in the class of 2009. Relative to prior work on this topic, we focus more on the timing of FAFSA filing, which is consequential for aid eligibility in Illinois, and we use a larger sample of students, nearly 110,000 in all.

Student populations that are otherwise equivalent in terms of test scores, family background, family income, and college aspirations, nonetheless achieve different college application outcomes depending on which high school they attended. This residual effect can be thought of as a measure of high school value added. Some of this value added can be explained by high school resources and expenditures, but some of it is also attributable to unmeasured variation in school leadership, quality of counseling staff, and student and parent peer networks.
This study examines the influence of universal-eligibility financial aid, or “Promise” programs, on postsecondary institutions’ expenditure decisions. Promise programs offer eligibility to all students from a particular geographic location to attend college. These are neither need- nor merit-based aid awards, but rather the process of allocation rests entirely on geographic residency. Illinois has the largest number of Promise programs of any state without a statewide incentive program. Currently, programs are granting aid in Blue Mound, Chicago, Galesburg, Peoria, and Rockford, with numerous other programs in the developmental stage (Hemenway, 2015). Despite this expansion, relatively little scholarly research has considered how institutions respond to Promise programs. Using a national panel dataset with data from 2000-2012, this paper employs a quasi-experimental difference-in-difference methodological design to explore how the introduction of a Promise program shapes internal institutional spending patterns.

For its conceptual framework, this study uses a rationale similar to Leslie, Slaughter, Taylor, and Zhang (2012). Promise program funders have granted scholarships to reduce student prices, so we expect that their funding intention is most closely aligned with the scholarships supporting student-related activities. We hypothesize that the formation of an additional revenue source for an institution, Promise scholarship funds, will lead to increased internal expenditures on the components of the institutional mission aligned with students such as instruction, academic support, and student services (and not in other areas). Because Promise programs are community-based scholarship programs, institutions most closely tied to their communities, community colleges, will be most likely (and most strongly) locally influenced. Hence, we hypothesize that community colleges will show more responsiveness to the programs, revealing greater student-related spending alignment than four-year institutions.

In general, we find that institutions do change their internal spending behaviors in response to the introduction of a Promise program in their community. We find effects in opposite directions at two- and four-year institutions. We show decreases in student-related expenditures, academic support, and student services expenses at two-year institutions a year after the implementation of a local Promise program. At four-year institutions we find increased expenditures on student services, student-related expenditures, and instructional-spending following the introduction of a Promise program, as compared to institutions that do not enroll Promise students, all else equal. The change in the patterns of expenditures does not show a clear alignment between the introduction of a Promise program and student-related spending at institutions.