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Focus on K–12 Education

K–12 education plays a critical role in increasing individual and collective prosperity. In partnership with policymakers, school systems, practitioners, and other stakeholders around the world, RAND experts use interdisciplinary approaches and innovative methods to help improve education outcomes and systems and to increase access and equity—making educational policies, programs, and practices more effective for all.



FEATURED PUBLICATIONS

TEACHER PAY FOR PERFORMANCE

No Evidence That Incentive Pay for Teacher Teams Improves Student Outcomes

Results from a Randomized Trial
Springer et al., 2012

An incentive program that paid teachers bonuses based on their students' growth in achievement in mathematics, English language arts, science, and social studies appears to have had no effect on student test scores in any of these subjects.

A Big Apple for Educators

New York City's Experiment with Schoolwide Performance Bonuses—Final Evaluation Report
Marsh et al., 2011

A New York City program designed to improve student performance through school-based financial incentives for teachers did not improve student achievement, most likely because it did not change teacher behavior and because the conditions needed to motivate staff were not achieved.

Designing Effective Pay-for-Performance in K–12 Education

Hamilton, 2009

A pay-for-performance system of educator compensation has been proposed to improve teacher effectiveness and thus improve student achievement. While there is some evidence that such systems work, there are numerous challenges to adopting them in the United States.

MEASURING TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS

Simultaneous One-Sided Tests with Application to Education Evaluation Systems

Han, Dalal, and McCaffrey, *Journal of Educational and Behavioral Statistics*, Vol. 37, No. 1, February 2012

There is widespread interest in using various statistical inference tools as a part of the evaluations for individual teachers and schools. The authors discuss controlling simultaneous errors in the classification of teachers or schools through a decision-theoretic approach.

Where You Come From or Where You Go

Distinguishing Between School Quality and the Effectiveness of Teacher Preparation Program Graduates
Mihaly et al., *Education Finance and Policy* (forthcoming)

School contextual effects raise concerns about the value-added modeling proposed for evaluating teacher preparation programs. The authors explore challenges involved in evaluating teacher preparation programs when controlling for school contextual bias.

Incorporating Student Performance Measures into Teacher Evaluation Systems

Steele, Hamilton, and Stecher, 2010

In an analysis of five school systems that have begun or are planning to incorporate measures of student performance into their teacher evaluations, the authors examine how the systems are addressing assessment quality, evaluating teachers in nontested subjects and grades, and assigning teachers responsibility for particular students.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

First-Year Principals in Urban School Districts

How Actions and Working Conditions Relate to Outcomes
Burkhauser et al., 2012

Principals new to their school face challenges that can influence their likelihood of improving their schools' performance and of remaining the principal. The authors examine the actions and perceived working conditions of first-year principals, relating information on those factors to subsequent achievement and retention.

Improving School Leadership Through Support, Evaluation, and Incentives

The Pittsburgh Principal Incentive Program
Hamilton et al., 2012

In 2007, the Pittsburgh Public Schools received funding to implement a set of reforms designed to improve the quality of school leadership, including a system of support, performance-based evaluation, and compensation for principals. Researchers examine how principals and other school staff have responded to the reforms and document the student achievement outcomes that accompanied implementation.

SCHOOL SYSTEMS AND REFORM

Standards-Based Accountability in the United States

Lessons Learned and Future Directions
Hamilton, Stecher, and Yuan, *Education Inquiry*, Vol. 3, No. 2, June 2012

Standards-based accountability (SBA) has been a primary driver of U.S. education policy for several decades. The authors identify lessons learned from the implementation of SBA in the United States and provide guidance for developing SBA systems that could promote beneficial outcomes for students.

The Transformation of a School System

Principal, Teacher, and Parent Perceptions of Charter and Traditional Schools in Post-Katrina New Orleans
Steele et al., 2011

After Hurricane Katrina, the existing school system in New Orleans was replaced with a decentralized choice-based system of both charter and district-run schools. Researchers examine schools' governance and operations, educational contexts, educator quality and mobility, and parental choice and involvement.

MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act: Maintaining Accountability and Nurturing Innovation Through a Reauthorized ESEA

RAND experts speak on the status of the bill commonly known as the No Child Left Behind Act (May 2012)
www.rand.org/v120522

Resilient Communities: Remaking a School System in the Wake of Natural Disaster

Jennifer Steele discusses the differences in policies and practices between charter and traditional schools in New Orleans (May 2012)
www.rand.org/a120515

Cultivating Thriving Schools

In a TEDxSoCal talk, Brian Stecher describes three steps we need to take to cultivate schools where students can thrive (July 2011)
www.rand.org/v110716

Making Summer Count

RAND experts discuss the loss of knowledge and educational skills that occurs during the summer months and describe how summer programs can disrupt this loss (June 2011)
www.rand.org/v110613-1



The loss of knowledge and educational skills during the summer months is cumulative over the course of a student's career and further widens the achievement gap between lower- and upper-income students. Furthermore, the likelihood of youth exposure to drug use and

other criminal behavior increases dramatically in the hours after school ends. RAND research shows that the availability of quality after-school activities can both boost academic performance and reduce participation in and victimization as a result of illicit activities.

Making Summer Count: How Summer Programs Can Boost Children's Learning

McCombs et al., 2011

An Outcome Evaluation of the Success for Kids Program

Maestas and Gaillot, 2010

Hours of Opportunity, Vol. 1: Lessons from Five Cities on Building Systems to Improve After-School, Summer School, and Other Out-of-School-Time Programs

Bodilly et al., 2010

Hours of Opportunity, Vol. 2: The Power of Data to Improve After-School Programs Citywide

McCombs et al., 2010

Hours of Opportunity, Vol. 3: Profiles of Five Cities Improving After-School Programs Through a Systems Approach

McCombs et al., 2010

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For more than three decades, RAND Education researchers from a wide range of disciplines have applied their expertise to almost every aspect of the education system. Sponsors of our research—including government agencies, foundations, and private-sector organizations—rely on us to bring accurate data and objective analysis to education policy in such areas as

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