

# Peeps From EEPS



## Greetings from Fordham and AEI

Feel free to contact Sarah DuPre ([sarah.dupre@aei.org](mailto:sarah.dupre@aei.org)) or Victoria Sears ([vsears@edexcellence.net](mailto:vsears@edexcellence.net)) with any questions or concerns.

In a continued effort to connect current and past EEPS, we're pleased to share Fordham and AEI's fourth edition of "Peeps from EEPS." Big thanks to all of you who turned out for our cross-cohort happy hours at AEF in February and at AERA in April!

We just wrapped up our fourth cohort and are now accepting applications for our fifth. If you know of someone who would be a good fit for EEPS, please send them our way within the next few days.

### What is EEPS?

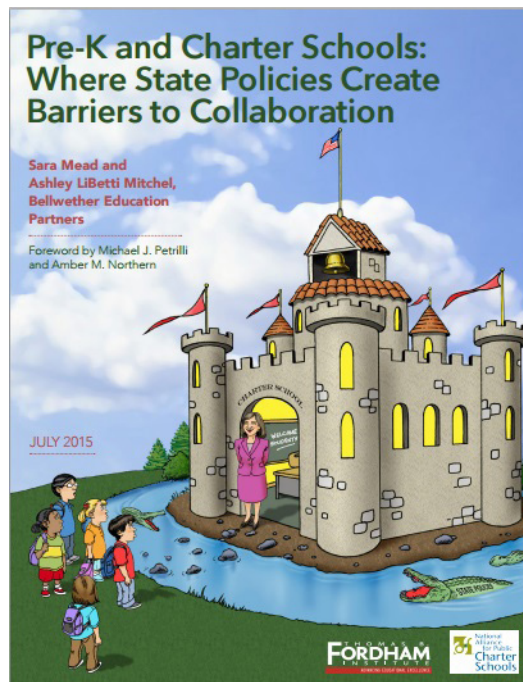
The **Emerging Education Policy Scholars (EEPS)** brings up-and-coming scholars to our nation's capital to meet with education policy experts and to share and brainstorm exciting new directions for K-12 education research. The program's goals are twofold:

- 1) To foster an opportunity for talented, promising scholars to connect with their peers in the field, as well as to introduce them to key players in the education policy arena.
- 2) To expand the pool of talent and ideas from which the education policy arena currently draws.

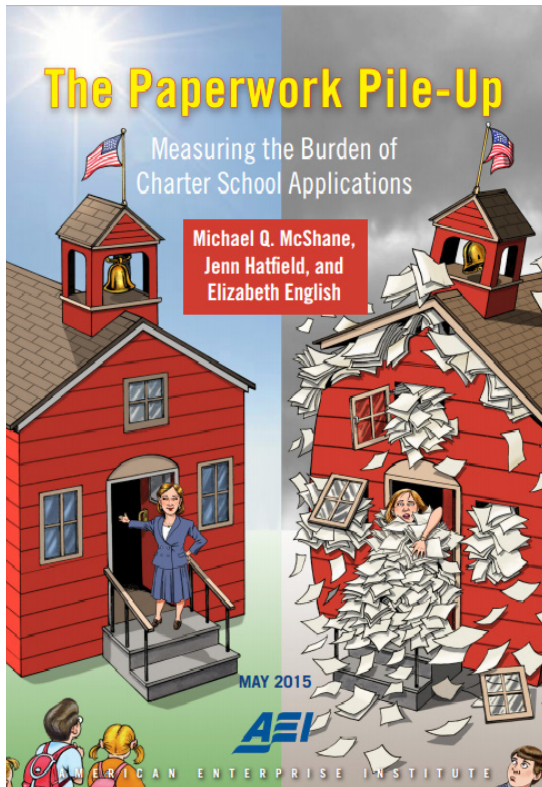
*The EEPS program is made possible through the generous support of the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, the Walton Family Foundation, and our sister organization, the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.*

# Fordham Report – *Pre-K and Charter Schools: Where State Policies Create Barriers to Collaboration*

By Sara Mead  
and Ashley LiBetti Mitchel



Both charter schools and preschools have shown tremendous potential to change the educational and life trajectories of low-income kids. In combination, they could do even more. Unfortunately, current policy and practice in many states limit the ability of charter schools to offer state-funded pre-K programs. Even though most states use a variety of providers to offer preschools—including public schools, Head Start programs, community-based child care centers, and for-profit and faith-based preschools—charter schools are often not among them. This report offers recommendations to policymakers to not only expand high-quality charter schools and high-quality pre-K for needy children, but to also alter policies and practices that deter the former from offering the latter.



# AEI Report – *The Paperwork Pile-Up*

By Michael Q. McShane, Jenn Hatfield,  
and Elizabeth English

Charter schools were created with a clear bargain in mind: Charter authorizers would give operators autonomy to run schools as they saw fit, as long as those schools met defined performance metrics. Currently, the balance between accountability and autonomy is heavily tilted toward accountability, with charter authorizers requiring unnecessarily extensive, time-consuming applications. Excising unnecessary or inappropriate requirements could shorten the average charter application by one-third, saving applicants more than seven hundred hours of work and avoiding wasteful expenditures that could be better applied to education.

## Upcoming Events:

### **Fordham Event: “Hidden in Plain Sight: Developing Tomorrow’s Leaders of the Education Sector,” September 28, 2015**

Developing strong K-12 system leaders—including those at the district, CMO, and nonprofit levels—is critical to ensuring the growth and success of the education sector. Yet many K-12 organizations tend to hire outside leaders rather than promoting from within, which disrupts the leadership pipeline and contributes to high turnover rates, meager professional development opportunities, and inadequate diversity at the top. What will it take to get organizations to invest in their own staff, whose talent may be hidden in plain sight?

On September 28, the Fordham Institute and EdFuel will host a discussion on how education organizations can learn to recognize and retain their most talented staff and turn them into tomorrow’s leaders.

**Thomas B. Fordham Institute  
7th Floor | 1016 16th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20036**

### **AEI Event: “Ten Years After Katrina: Education reform in New Orleans,” September 16, 2015**

It’s been ten years since Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in August 2005. Following the destruction, New Orleans’s schools and systems underwent radical changes. What happened during those ten years? How are students doing now, and what can other school districts learn from New Orleans’s experience?

We welcome you to join us at AEI as Frederick M. Hess and Nat Malkus, along with Center for American Progress’ Catherine Brown, host a conference to explore these questions and what other school districts from across the country can learn from New Orleans’s transformation. The conference will feature research by Doug Harris of Education Research Alliance at Tulane University and conversation by notable scholars and policymakers in the education field.

**American Enterprise Institute  
12th Floor | 1150 17th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20036**

# 2015 Cohort Updates

**Daniel Bowen** has accepted an assistant professor position that commences this fall at Texas A&M's College of Education and Human Development. He also recently contracted with the Young Audiences of Houston, Inc. to evaluate its district-wide Arts Access Initiative, which aims to supplement arts opportunities and improve educational outcomes for students from less privileged backgrounds. This summer, he worked with the Holocaust Museum of Houston to design and later conduct a field experiment that assesses the impact of their field trip program on students' civic values.

**Meghan Condon** will be joining the faculty at DePaul University's School of Public Service as a tenure-track assistant professor this fall.

**Ben Creed** continues work on his dissertation (currently) entitled "Defining school competition and exploring its systemic effects: evaluating the systemic effects of competition on student outcomes in Michigan." He is also working on a project with the Michigan Department of Education to better understand Michigan's interdistrict school choice policy, exploring who uses the program, what schools students use the policy to attend, and how it impacts student outcomes. He is excited to enter the job market this Fall.

In July, **Caitlin Farrell** transitioned to a full-time research faculty position at the University of Colorado Boulder as director of the National Center for Research in Policy and Practice. Continuing lines of work include policy making at the district level and educators' use of evidence in examining how community college students in Texas make decisions about transferring to four-year institutions.

**Huriya Jabbar** has been busy presenting and publishing papers based on her dissertation. Her most recent publication examined school leaders' strategies when facing competition in New Orleans, forthcoming in *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. This year, she presented research on school competition, school leaders' marketing strategies, how districts regulate competition, and how policymakers use research to inform charter school policies at AERA, AEF, ICSCR, and UCEA. At AERA, she also received three awards for her dissertation from Division L (Policy & Politics), Division A (Administration, Organization, & Leadership), and the Politics of Education Association. This summer, she presented her research at a New Orleans conference in light of the tenth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, which was hosted by the Education Research Alliance for New Orleans at Tulane University. Huriya is also currently gearing up for a three-year mixed-methods study beginning this fall, which will examine how community college students in Texas make decisions about transferring to four-year institutions.

As part of the Strategic Data Project fellowship, **Cara Jackson** is completing a study that explores options for generating reliable and cost-efficient scores from classroom observations.

**Robert Kelchen**, an assistant professor of higher education at Seton Hall University, is currently working on several research projects at the intersection of higher education accountability and finance policies. He also continues to serve as the methodologist for *Washington Monthly's* annual college

rankings. In the last few months, he has had articles published in the *Journal of Higher Education*, the *Journal of Education Finance*, and the *Journal of Student Financial Aid*.

**Tricia Maas** recently co-authored two white papers for the Carnegie Corporation of New York with colleagues from the Center on Reinventing Public Education: "Next Generation School Districts: What Capacities do Districts Need to Create and Sustain Schools that are Ready to Deliver on the Common Core?," which she wrote with Robin Lake and Paul Hill, and "The Case for Coherent High Schools," which she also wrote with Hill. In addition, an article that she co-authored with Lake, "Effective Charter and Traditional School Characteristics: Aligning Findings for Informed Policy Making," which compares the current knowledge about the characteristics of effective charter schools to findings from the broader body of effective school research, was published in the *Journal of School Choice* in June 2015. Tricia's current research projects examine the use of student-centered learning in secondary schools serving at-risk students, the implementation of blended learning in parochial schools, and charter high schools' policies related to replacing students they lose after the beginning of ninth grade (otherwise known as backfill). Stay tuned for reports and papers on these topics!

**James Soland** successfully defended his dissertation in May and graduated this June. (Congrats, James!) He also received an acceptance (pending a few more edits) for a journal article showing that teachers who serve ELLs are differentially effective at promoting listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Finally, he is going to start blogging for NWEA on topics related to fairness in assessment and accountability.

## Veteran EEPS Updates

**Hella Bel Hadj Amor** recently won the Hawaii Educational Research Association's 2015 Distinguished Paper award. The paper, titled "The Native Hawaiian Student Achievement Gap: Different Methods, Different Estimates," discusses the importance of carefully evaluating achievement gaps between student subgroups and shows how the choice between different methods can result in widely varying estimates of achievement gaps.

**Daniel Araya** is now advising Ecuador's secretary of technology and innovation and has a new publication out with Palgrave titled "Rethinking US Education Policy."

**Brooks Bowden** is the director of training for an IES methods training program in cost-effectiveness and benefit-cost analysis at Teachers College, Columbia University, which former EEPS are welcome to attend (<http://www.cbcsemethodstraining.org>). The next session will take place this month in New York; additional sessions will be held in May 2016 in Los Angeles, June 2016 in New York, and August 2016 in D.C. Brooks recently co-authored a report with MDRC evaluating a supplemental reading program that utilizes volunteer tutors from the community (<http://www.mdrc.org/publication/mobilizing-volunteer-tutors-improve-student-literacy>). He also co-authored a CBCSE report examining the returns to socio-emotional learning (<http://cbcse.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/SEL-Revised.pdf>).

# Veteran EEPS Updates, continued

**Sarah Cohodes** successfully defended her dissertation and graduated with a Ph.D. in public policy from Harvard in May. Starting this fall, she'll be joining the faculty at Teachers College, Columbia University as an assistant professor of education and public policy.

**Patrick Denice** has a forthcoming article in *Social Science Research* on labor market returns among for-profit college students, as well as a forthcoming co-authored article in the *American Sociological Review* that looks at variation in wages by the degree to which one's manager shares organizational financial information. He has also co-written a series of reports at the Center on Reinventing Public Education about the benefits and challenges of implementing common enrollment systems in Denver and New Orleans. Additional current work focuses on the correlates of and trends in college enrollment among older adults over the past three decades. He also enjoyed attending the Institute for Policy Research's annual summer workshop on cluster-randomized trials at Northwestern University this past July.

**Anna Egalite** is wrapping up her postdoctoral fellowship with the Program on Education Policy and Governance at Harvard University. She recently accepted a tenure-track position at North Carolina State University, where she will join the department of leadership, policy, adult and higher education as an assistant professor. Anna's recent publications include "Representation in the classroom: The effect of own-race teachers on student achievement," which appeared in *Economics of Education Review*, and "Do Teacher-Coaches Make the Cut? The Effectiveness of Athletic Coaches as Math and Reading Teachers," which is forthcoming in *Education Policy Analysis Archives*. Anna is currently collaborating on a methodological paper validating synthetic matching methods for evaluating charter schools, several peer effects studies that examine the impact of special education classmates on student absences, and an experimental evaluation.

**Michael Gottfried** shared with us that he recently received tenure (UCSB). Congratulations, Michael!

**Jason Grissom** was promoted to the position of associate professor of public policy and education with tenure at Vanderbilt this spring. (Go 'Dores, and congrats, Jason!)

**Matt Kraft** has been enjoying teaching courses in applied statistics and the economics of education at Brown. His recent article in *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* with John Papay, titled "Do supportive professional environments promote teacher development? Explaining heterogeneity in returns to teaching experience," was selected for the Palmer O. Johnson Memorial Award as the most outstanding publication appearing in the AERA journals in 2014. The article documents wide variation in the degree to which teachers improve over time and shows that teachers working in more supportive professional environments improve more over time than those working in less supportive contexts.

**Lesley Lavery** recently completed her pre-tenure review and will take her first sabbatical this fall to conduct research on the evolving relationship between teachers' unions and charter schools. Several of Lesley's articles co-authored with EEPS participants from years past were accepted for publication this year: "Dynamic Participation in Interdistrict Open Enrollment" (with Deven Carlson at *Educational Policy*); "Measuring Social Capital: Accounting for Nested Data and Subnetworks within Schools" (with Meghan Condon and Par Jason Engle at *Social Indicators Research*); and "The Politics of the Common Core: Conflict Expansion in a Partisan Era" and "The Evolving Politics of the Common Core" (with Ashley Jochim at Brookings's *Publius: The Journal of Federalism and Governance Studies*). Lesley's co-authored work on collective bargaining agreements and the distribution of teacher characteristics has now been published at *Industrial Labor Relations Review* and *Educational Researcher*.

**Morgan Polikoff** is co-principal investigator of the new Institute of Education Sciences center on college- and career-ready standards (with co-PIs at the University of Pennsylvania and the American Institutes for Research). The five-year study will examine the implementation and impact of new standards in states across the country, develop new instruments for measuring implementation, and test an intervention to improve instruction and student performance.

**Carolyn Sattin-Bajaj** is finishing her fourth year in a tenure-track position in the College of Education and Human Services at Seton Hall University, where she also directs the Center for College Readiness. Her book *Unaccompanied Minors: Immigrant Youth, School Choice and the Pursuit of Equity* was published in fall 2014 by Harvard Education Press. An article adapted from the book was published in the May 2015 issue of the *American Journal of Education*. She continues to work in the area of school choice and educational equity, focusing specifically on Latino immigrant families, and her newest projects examine the impact of informational tools on school choice participation and decision making.

**Andrew Saultz** continues to work in the areas of educational federalism, accountability, and parent involvement. He was recently awarded a grant from the Spencer Foundation with Andrew McEachin and Lance Fusarelli to compare the use of executive waivers in education to other sectors. Andrew has forthcoming articles on the supply side of charter location in New York City (*Journal of School Choice*), state politics associated with NCLB waivers (*Educational Policy*), the cheating scandal in Atlanta and disability policy (*Teachers College Record*), charter school policy in Washington State (*Peabody Journal of Education*), and performance management in education (*Public Performance Management Review*).

**Arnold Shober** was awarded the Faculty Research Award at Lawrence University this June.

# Veteran EEPS Updates, continued

**Jeffrey (Jeff) Snyder** completed his Ph.D. and will begin as a postdoctoral research fellow in education, philanthropy, and advocacy at the University of Michigan and Michigan State University this fall. A recently completed book chapter can also be found in *The New Education Philanthropy: Politics, Policy, and Reform* (Harvard Education Press, fall 2015).

**Katharine Stevens** joined the education policy group at the American Enterprise Institute last September as the inaugural research fellow in early childhood education. She's been focusing on the research, policy, and politics surrounding early childhood education, the role of early learning in expanding opportunity for low-income Americans, and the implementation challenges of rapidly growing early childhood education initiatives, especially around issues of teacher quality.

## Follow our EEPS, AEI, and Fordham on Twitter!

### EEPS

Daniel Bowen: @danielhbowen  
Ben Creed: @BenjaminCreed  
Cara Jackson: @caragerber  
Robert Kelchen: @rkelchen  
Tricia Maas: @triciamaas  
Ryan McCarty: @RyanP\_McCarty  
Hella Bel Hadj Amor: @educationnw  
Brooks Bowden: @abrooksbowden  
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Sarah DuPre @sadupre

### Fordham

Fordham Institute @educationgadfly  
Mike Petrilli @MichaelPetrilli  
Victoria Sears @VictoriaEHSears

# Recent and Upcoming Research

## ***A Democratic Constitution for Public Education***

**University of Chicago Press, 2015**

*Paul Hill and Ashley Jochim*

America's education system faces a stark dilemma: It needs governmental oversight, rules, and regulations, but it also needs to be adaptable enough to address student needs and the many different problems that can arise at any given school—something that large educational bureaucracies are notoriously bad at. In this book, Hill and Jochim propose a redesign of K–12 governance that retains certain core governmental roles like setting standards and protecting against abuses, but also clarifies schools' rights and obligations. School boards, renamed "civic education councils," would no longer operate schools directly, serve as the employers of record for teachers and principals, or tax schools for services to maintain a large central office bureaucracy. Instead, they would focus on overseeing all schools operating in the district based on performance and family/neighborhood needs.

## **"How Parents Navigate Public School Choice"**

**Center on Reinventing Public Education, 2014**

*Ashley Jochim, Michael DeArmond, Betheny Gross, and Robin Lake*

This report examines parents' experiences with public school choice across eight "high-choice" cities: Baltimore, Cleveland, Denver, Detroit, Indianapolis, New Orleans, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. In each city, researchers surveyed five hundred public school parents (four thousand total) and collected data on the systems that shape how they navigate school choice, including the availability of information, the process of enrolling, and transportation options. The findings suggest that families face challenges on both the supply side (access to high-quality schools and schools that fit) and the demand side (barriers to choice that limit participation in choice programs).

## **"The Evolving Politics of the Common Core: Conflict Expansion and Policy Implementation"**

***Publius: A Journal of Federalism*, 2015**

*Ashley Jochim and Lesley Lavery*

The Common Core State Standards Initiative was adopted by forty-five states and heralded by supporters from both sides of the political aisle. Four years later, several states have rescinded their support and dozens more have introduced legislation to reconsider or limit participation. Standard explanations for opposition have focused on Republican state legislators and conservative ideological groups emphasizing concerns about a perceived loss of local control. But our analysis reveals that opposition to the standards shifted considerably over time, engaging these groups and issues initially, but expanding to include Democratic policymakers and their allies as implementation proceeded. A range of issues that were largely ignored when the initiative was adopted—including concerns over cost, teacher evaluation, accountability, and student privacy—were brought to the fore as the policy had to be reconciled with existing systems and institutions. This analysis has implications for scholars tracing policy change in a federal system by revealing the centrality of implementation to understanding how political conflict evolves over time.

## Recent and Upcoming Research, continued

### **“Leveling the playing field for high school choice through decision supports: A randomized intervention study”**

#### **Forthcoming**

*Carolyn Sattin-Bajaj, Sarah Cohodes, Jennifer Jennings, and Sean Corcoran*

EEPS participants Carolyn Sattin-Bajaj (Cohort 1) and Sarah Cohodes (Cohort 3), along with Jennifer Jennings and Sean Corcoran (both of New York University), received funding from the WT Grant Foundation to support a school-level randomized trial that will examine the impact of providing eighth-grade students in over 125 New York City middle schools one of three decision supports to facilitate their high school choices. The multi-year grant will support the development and delivery of three interventions across school sites, as well as interviews with an estimated two hundred eighth-grade students and their parents about their usage of these decision tools. The study builds on pilot research (funded by the Spencer Foundation and the Heckscher Foundation for Children) that tested two interventions in twenty-nine schools, along with surveys and included interviews with guidance counselors at sixty additional middle schools.

### **“The underutilized potential of teacher-to-parent communication: Evidence from a field experiment”**

#### **Forthcoming in *Economics of Education Review***

*Matthew Kraft and Todd Rogers*

In this study, we design and implement a quick and low-cost teacher-to-parent communication system in an effort to mobilize parental involvement in their children’s education. The intervention delivered weekly, one-sentence, individualized messages from teachers to the parents of high school students in a credit recovery program. Messages decreased the percentage of students who failed to earn course credit from 15.8 percent to 9.3 percent—a 41 percent reduction. This reduction resulted primarily from preventing dropouts rather than from reducing failure or dismissal rates. The intervention shaped the content of parent-child conversations, with messages emphasizing what students could improve (rather than what students were doing well) producing the largest effects. We estimate the cost of this intervention per additional student credit earned to be less than one-tenth the typical cost per credit earned for the district. These findings underscore the value of educational policies that encourage and facilitate teacher-to-parent communication.

### **“Using Student Test Scores to Measure Principal Performance”**

#### ***Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 37(1): 3-28, 2015**

*Jason A. Grissom, Demetra Kalogrides, and Susanna Loeb*

The article discusses the conceptual underpinnings of different models for estimating value added for principals, examines the properties of these models, and compares the results of the models empirically using data from Miami-Dade County Public Schools. The main result is that choice of model is substantively important, with many principals grouped in the top quartile under one model placed in the bottom quartile with a different approach. Relatively simple models — like the ones used by most state and district principal evaluation systems are — the least conceptually appealing, but models that more convincingly separate the effect of the principal from the effect of other school inputs face data and other limitations that make them difficult to implement in personnel evaluation settings.

## Recent and Upcoming Research, continued

### **“Bridging the discontinuity in adolescent literacy? Mixed evidence from a middle grades intervention”**

***Education Finance and Policy, 2015***

*Shaun M. Dougherty*

### **“Middle school math acceleration and equitable access to 8th grade algebra: Evidence from the Wake County Public School System”**

***Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 2015***

*Shaun M. Dougherty, J. Goodman, D. Hill, E. Litke, and L. Page*

Both papers evaluate the effect of district-based middle school policies in large, nationally representative districts and use a fuzzy regression-discontinuity research design. In the *Education Finance and Policy* piece, the policy is designed to place students who appear not to be on a college reading trajectory in a literacy support class rather than an elective world language. In the *Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis* piece, we evaluate the effect of a policy designed to use objective criteria to place students on a college-ready track in math. The former study finds negative effects for black students, while the latter finds largely beneficial, though imperfect, effects.

## Have You Joined the EEPS Google Group?

If not, you could be missing out on EEPS event announcements, job postings, opportunities to work with colleagues, and meticulously diagrammed instructions for the secret EEPS handshake.

In order to avoid spam in your inboxes, the only direct emails you will receive from us in the future will be official EEPS correspondence. All unofficial messages (happy-hour invitations, job postings, requests for expertise, etc.) will go through the group. EEPS are encouraged to take advantage of this resource by posting their own research and other work projects, questions, ideas, announcements, etc. Over time, we hope that this group will help facilitate collaborations within and across cohorts, as well as help everyone stay in touch.

If there is anything we can do to enhance functionality or improve your experience more generally, please let us know!

### To join

1. Visit <http://groups.google.com/group/EEPScholars>
2. Click on “Apply for Membership,” while signed into the account you’d like to use
3. Fill out the short form (we recommend receiving emails as a “daily summary” or one email per post)
4. Click “Apply to join this group”