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***EXTRA***

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## WELCOME TO OUR SUMMER EDITION

Happy summer, and welcome to our new issue NNERPP Extra!

We are excited to share our summer edition with you, which features four new articles: First up, insights from The University House of Education, the first RPP in France, about RPP research addressing elementary school students' challenges with handwriting; next, a deep dive into the perspectives of district research leaders on the meaning and value of RPP work; then, an overview of NNERPP's recent RPP 101 Workshop Series and a new resource addressing questions around RPP basics; and finally, reflections on why engaging in improvement work can feel like it's taking up a lot of time for school district leads.

A special thank you goes to our wonderful guest authors who contributed to this issue.

Happy reading!

### NNERPP | Extra Online

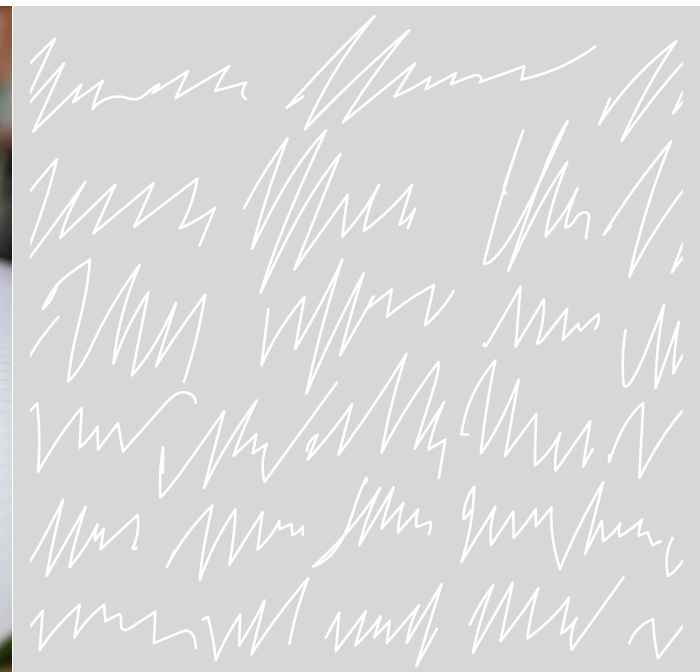
Be sure to check out the NNERPP | Extra website if you'd like to explore this issue's articles (and more!) online.

### About NNERPP

NNERPP aims to develop, support, and connect research-practice partnerships in education to improve their productivity. Please visit our website at [nnerpp.rice.edu](https://nnerpp.rice.edu) and find us on Twitter: [@RPP\\_Network](https://twitter.com/RPP_Network).

# ASSESSING SECOND GRADERS' HANDWRITING USING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY: FINDINGS FROM AN RPP IN FRANCE

By Nelly Clerval, Vanessa Jussy, Aurélie Vernassier, Cindy Cappelli, and Valérie Halbert-Cadet | Besançon School District, France + The University House of Education (Maison Universitaire de l'Éducation: LaMue) | PRACTICE-SIDE and Denis Pasco, Marie Mazerolle, Erik Gustafsson | University of Franche-Comté, France + LaMue; Thibault Asselborn | School Rebound, Switzerland; and Lucas Burget and Pierre Dillenbourg | Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Switzerland | RESEARCH-SIDE



## OVERVIEW

### THE RESEARCH ARTIFACT

The [Dynamilis project](#) (publication forthcoming)

The Dynamilis project examines and addresses elementary school students' challenges with handwriting. [Dynamilis](#) is an evidence-based digital tool developed by [School Rebound](#) based on research done in the [Human-Computer Interaction Lab](#) of the [Swiss Federal Institute of Technology](#). The tool uses artificial intelligence to create children's complete handwriting profiles, including the strengths and weaknesses of their writing. Our research-practice partnership (RPP), The University House of Education (LaMue) –the first RPP initiative launched in France (Besançon)– partnered with School Rebound and the Human-Computer Interaction Lab of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology for this project.



## ASSESSING SECOND GRADERS' HANDWRITING USING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY: FINDINGS FROM AN RPP IN FRANCE, CONTINUED

### THE RPP

The University House of Education ("Maison Universitaire de l'Education" in French and "LaMue" for short) was founded in September 2022 in Besançon, France as the first RPP in France. Partners include the University of Franche-Comté (24,000 students), the Besançon School District (200,000 students), and Besançon City Hall (120,000 stakeholders). The RPP aims to address current challenges in education through joint initiatives. The purpose of our first initiative, which we describe in this article, was to use evidence-based educational technologies to improve students' learning. The partnership is funded by the French government under the France 2030 strategy and by the French Research Agency. LaMue is NNERPP's first international member.

### WHY THIS WORK

The Dynamilis project was initiated by Nelly Clerval, one of our practice-side RPP team members (and a co-author of this article). Nelly is a pedagogical advisor at the school district and works closely with elementary school teachers. In various district meetings and trainings, teachers shared with Nelly their observations and concerns about students not wanting to write by hand anymore and having difficulties in their handwriting. Nelly brought this issue to the RPP. Marie Mazerolle, one of our research-side team members (and also one of the authors of this article) immediately connected the observations the teachers had made to what we know about children's handwriting from existing research: handwriting is a multifaceted, complex task that requires various skills, such as being able to pay attention, visual perception, linguistic skills, and fine motor skills (Dinehart, 2015; Feder & Majnemer, 2007). As children spend up to 30-

60% of their time at school writing, handwriting difficulties can affect legibility and speed which can seriously impact both children's behavioral and academic development (Berninger et al., 1997). Moreover, evidence supports a link between handwriting and aspects of literacy, including both reading and writing (Ray et al., 2022), and just last year, a report from France's Department of Education found "a clear deterioration in the holding of the pencil or pen (...) and an overall lack of care in writing" (French Department of Education, 2023). Therefore, Marie took the teachers' concerns seriously right away, affirming that early detection and remediation of handwriting difficulties is crucial (Christensen, 2009; Feder & Majnemer, 2007).

With practitioners and researchers equally interested in working to address this issue, our RPP team decided to start a new project led by Nelly and RPP Director Denis Pasco (co-author of this article). Team member Erik Gustafsson (co-author of this article) identified "Dynamilis" as a promising tool to help us examine and improve the handwriting of our local students and

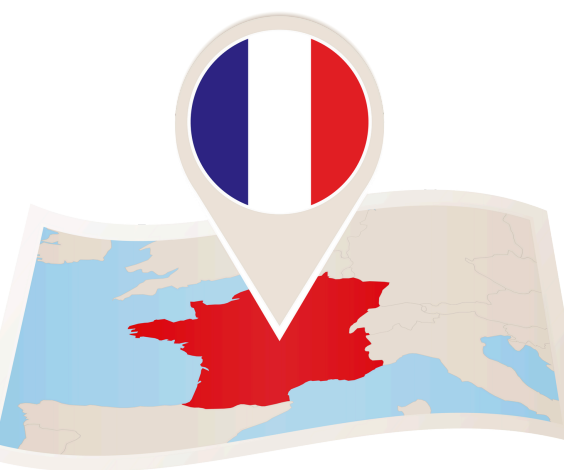


## ASSESSING SECOND GRADERS' HANDWRITING USING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY: FINDINGS FROM AN RPP IN FRANCE, CONTINUED

suggested the collaboration with “Dynamilis” developer, School Rebound, and the Computer-Human Interaction Lab of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology.

### WHAT THE WORK EXAMINES

Our project team consisted of staff and teachers from local schools, university-based researchers from the local university (University of Franche-Comté) and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, and engineers from School Rebound. We decided to start the project with an analysis of students' handwriting. As practitioners noted that most of the work on handwriting is done during first and second grade, we focused on assessing second graders' handwriting. The method consisted of collecting samples of second graders' handwriting using Dynamilis with an iPad and a digital pen. The handwriting assessment asks students to do one basic drawing (e.g., a cat) and to copy five short sentences (e.g., “the sky is blue”). Using this input, Dynamilis is able to assess four sets of features of handwriting, including static features (i.e., purely geometric characteristics of the written text), kinematic features (i.e., dynamics of handwriting path), pressure features (i.e., characteristics of the pressure recorded between the pen tip and the tablet surface), and tilt features (i.e., characteristics of the pen tilt). Both practitioners and researchers collected the data within schools (N=134) from a sample of 1,914 second graders. We combined this data with student gender and socioeconomic status of their school, since research suggests a link between these variables and students' handwriting.



### FINDINGS

Our main findings were:

## ASSESSING SECOND GRADERS' HANDWRITING USING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY: FINDINGS FROM AN RPP IN FRANCE, CONTINUED

(1) Girls outperformed boys on overall handwriting scores (65 out of 100 vs. 60 out of 100) and especially on kinematic features of handwriting (i.e., dynamics of handwriting path: 64 vs. 59). The overall handwriting score is composed of the scores for the four sets of features analyzed by the Dynamilis tool as described above (static, kinematic, pressure, and tilt), each evaluated on a score between 0 and 100.

(2) More boys than girls had a high level of handwriting difficulties (i.e., <10 on 100) and more girls than boys had high handwriting scores (i.e., >90 on 100).

(3) There was a significant effect ( $p < .05$ ) of school socioeconomic status on students' overall handwriting scores. Students from high socioeconomic status schools performed 2.6% better than those attending lower socioeconomic status schools. These differences were mainly due to higher scores in the kinematics of the movement, but also due to higher scores in the pressure exerted on the digital pen.

(4) Surprisingly, we also found a significant effect of educational networks on students' handwriting. Educational networks are networks of associated schools based on students' path from elementary to high school, i.e., the path of elementary schools feeding into certain middle schools feeding into certain high schools. Students attending schools belonging to certain networks performed better than students attending schools belonging to other networks.

These findings were shared between our RPP

team members, including researchers and practitioners, to discuss their meaning and potential next steps.

### IMPACT AND USE OF THE WORK

We are currently working on next steps in this research and how these findings can make an impact in the classroom. Importantly, undertaking this project together had valuable impacts on us as a newly launched RPP and newly formed RPP team, which we share here. The Dynamilis project was one of the first to be conducted within our RPP and at the time, we didn't have any brokers to facilitate the relationship between the members of the research and practice/policy side of our partnership. So, we learned a lot (and are still learning)!

First, we learned that researchers and practitioners definitely do not share the same language and organizational culture! We had to work out misunderstandings due to words that had different meanings in the research and practice worlds. Also, the frequent use of acronyms within the school district and the university was challenging. Each partner had to clearly explain what they wanted to say and what they meant. It took us a long time to acculturate to each other's world and it's still an ongoing process.

Second, our practice-side team members learned a lot about the process of doing research. When we first started this process, they were unfamiliar with the concept of a

## ASSESSING SECOND GRADERS' HANDWRITING USING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY: FINDINGS FROM AN RPP IN FRANCE, CONTINUED

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literature review. Throughout our work together, they learned about handwriting from a research literature standpoint, about the process of research design, research methodology, and data analysis. We are continuing to work on building their capacity in these areas (while always acknowledging the equally important expertise they bring!).

Lastly, our research-side team members learned a lot about the reality of teaching handwriting skills in diverse classrooms and about collecting data and engaging in joint research activities with practitioners who had no background in research. In the beginning, researchers behaved as if they were working with their doctoral students! We are continuing to work on building researchers' capacity in these areas as well.

This first project was a big challenge for us but we learned valuable lessons that will help us going forward. Additionally, findings from this first study are having a direct impact on school district policy to support low performing students with additional resources. The district is currently working on creating these new policies based on our findings – which marks the first time the Besançon School District is taking action in response to research findings.

### OPEN QUESTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

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Based on this first experience of working together, practitioners and researchers from the Dynamilis project decided to push their investigation further by developing and conducting a randomized control trial study to evaluate the potential of Dynamilis handwriting games to improve first-grade students' handwriting skills. These games include both digital and analog activities designed to help children improve their handwriting skills in playful, fun ways. They also decided to work on recommendations to the school district to support low performing students in improving handwriting skills with additional resources. The study is currently ongoing and will be followed by a research paper where we will share detailed findings from this follow-up study. We are excited to see how Besançon's students will improve and rediscover their joy for writing.

*This article was written by members of [The University House of Education](#) (Maison Universitaire de l'Éducation: La MUE) team: Nelly Clerval is Pedagogical Advisor at Besançon School District in France; Vanessa Jussy, Aurélie Vernassier, Cindy Cappelli, and Valérie*



## ASSESSING SECOND GRADERS' HANDWRITING USING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY: FINDINGS FROM AN RPP IN FRANCE, CONTINUED

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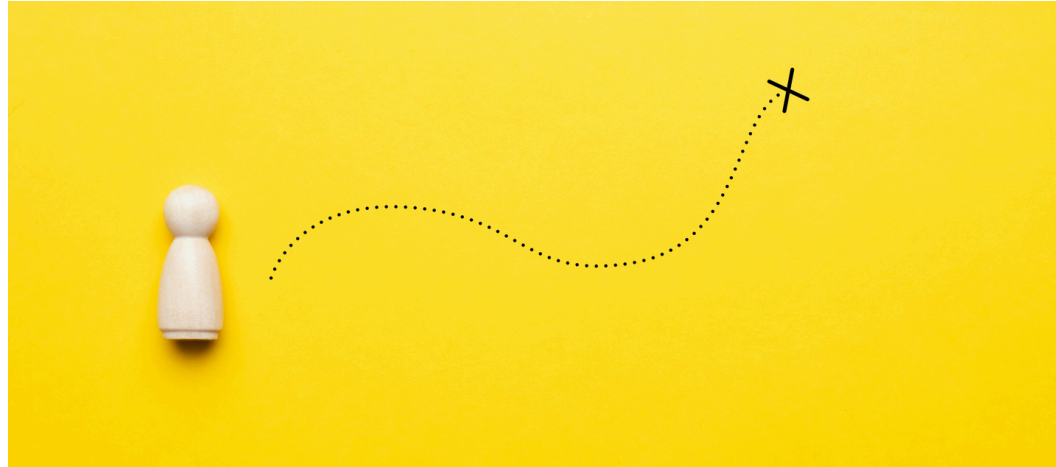
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# EQUITY-CENTERED AND VISION-ALIGNED RESEARCH: STRATEGIES OF A DISTRICT RESEARCH OFFICE TO BUILD BETTER RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS

By Samhitha Krishnan and Sarah Dickson | Chicago Public Schools  
Erin Henrick | Partner to Improve



Although examples of collaborative education research continue to grow, research conducted by external researchers using school districts as study sites still occurs. This form of research can often recreate and amplify unequal power dynamics. [1] For example, a researcher may have a question or research study in mind and then work to gain access to a school or district to collect data to answer their research question. They gather primary research, access secondary data about students and staff, and in some cases, write deficit-oriented narratives that emphasize the shortcomings of a school or district, often without developing a relationship with the community in which they collected data. Along these lines, teachers and school staff are regularly told to use evidence-based practices and curriculum, but often do not have the resources or capacity to meaningfully engage with researchers in the research and development of these resources, which further perpetuates the one-sided nature of this work.

[2] In addition, from our experience, when district leaders seek out external researchers to inform decisions about where and how to commit limited resources, they often fail to also tap into the expertise of their own staff members. Taken together, these examples highlight missed opportunities for collaborative learning, research, and development.

Research-practice partnerships (RPPs) aim to disrupt the unilateral decision-making process in research spaces by encouraging deep and sustainable partnerships between the practice side (for example, school districts) and the research side (for example, universities). For partners working in an RPP approach, they understand that district staff members have a wealth of research and lived experience which, if meaningfully incorporated into the rigorous methodology of research partners, can allow for research findings that can inform positive

## EQUITY-CENTERED AND VISION-ALIGNED RESEARCH: STRATEGIES OF A DISTRICT RESEARCH OFFICE TO BUILD BETTER RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS, CONTINUED

change in the district. District research leaders –those working in a research department or office at a school district– often play an important role in those RPPs that include districts as practice-side partners, while also being responsible for a plethora of tasks outside of the RPP context within the fast-paced and highly politicized environment of a school district. Being researchers but on the practice side, they are uniquely positioned to link research and practice, facilitating the use of research in district central offices (see more [here](#)). They thus also bring unique insights into and knowledge of an RPP’s ability to support the practice side in ways that are helpful and cognizant of

the realities and challenges as well as goals and dreams of school districts and the teachers and students they serve.

In this article, we share perspectives on RPP work from two district research leaders, offering lessons and opportunities from our work in Chicago. We are Samhitha Krishnan and Sarah Dickson, members of the [Chicago Public Schools](#) (CPS) External Research Team (ERT) who are working to build bridges between external researchers and school spaces, and Erin Henrick, writing from the perspective of the evaluator of the [Chicago Alliance for Equity in Computer Science](#) (CAFÉCS) RPP. We draw on examples from the intentional efforts of the External Research Team’s initiatives to further develop the interactions between collaborative research partners and educators working in CPS. These examples demonstrate how district research leaders can support the development of RPPs that engage in equity-focused research rooted in school needs and balanced inquiry. Our thoughts and insights first surfaced during an in-depth interview with Erin as part of an evaluation of the CAFÉCS partnership, which we now expand on here. We recognize that we are only two district research leaders speaking from our distinct context of working within a very large urban school district, and thus can certainly not speak for all district research leaders. We do believe there is value in diving into our own experiences and thoughts more deeply, in the hopes of shining a spotlight on the meaning and value of RPP work from this vantage point. We hope you join us as we dive in!

### CONTEXT

Chicago Public Schools is the fourth largest public school district in the country. We serve over 300,000 students in 636 schools. Almost 70% of our students are economically disadvantaged, and almost 90% of our students are students of color. We are a large district, a diverse district, and a segregated district. A tremendous amount of research has been conducted in CPS, often by researchers who do not look like the vast majority of our school community. While there is a growing commitment to acknowledge and address the negative impact of unequal power dynamics and distrust that exists between the researcher and those participating in research studies, much more work needs to be done. [3]





## EQUITY-CENTERED AND VISION-ALIGNED RESEARCH: STRATEGIES OF A DISTRICT RESEARCH OFFICE TO BUILD BETTER RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS, CONTINUED

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Today, we are lucky to have a strong foundation of research collaboration in Chicago, fueled by a desire to do better by our schools. We are challenged and supported by external researchers who share our desire to be present and responsive to school needs. The External Research Team serves as brokers between the district practitioners and researchers from outside organizations (mostly universities) and works to expand the boundaries of whose voices get to be included in decisions around research design and implementation. We have been working to shift away from the typical scope of interactions between the district research offices and external researchers, where the focus is solely on compliance: navigating the research review process and data use contracts required for project approval, and once approved, “the subsequent interaction between the district and the researchers usually is minimal,” resulting in researcher-school district relationships which are not particularly beneficial to either party. [4]

The External Research Team strives to integrate strategic thinking and actionable outcomes about district research priorities into our compliance-oriented roles. Our team sits within the Department of School Quality Measurement and Research, which allows us to connect with both data quality experts and policymakers focused on redesigning the school accountability policy. [5] School districts are often organized in hierarchical silos where decision-making powers are limited. In contrast, our team has been working to connect with subject matter experts across a range of central office staff to expand the number of practitioners engaging in research. A key part of this engagement has stemmed from developing a job position specifically designed for partnerships and engagement. As the research partnerships manager, Samhitha is able to dedicate targeted capacity toward the expansion of the research ecosystem within CPS by building out a network that consists of district- and network-staff, parents, and school leaders.

The rich research partnerships that CPS shares with both local and national institutions place us in a critical space of both engagement and questioning. While embracing the potential for research to meaningfully inform decision-making, we also recognize that the education research enterprise is fundamentally flawed in the ways that meaningful research knowledge is not always integrated into educational practice [6] and needs to be reconceptualized if we are to truly build equitable spaces that prioritize the needs of districts and the students they serve.

### THE ROLE OF RESEARCH AT CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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We thus began this work by examining and documenting our perspectives as district research leaders related to the role of research at the district, which has implications for how RPP partners work with us. We conceptualized our work as being *equity-centered and vision-aligned research, which means connecting and learning from a radically inclusive range of experts to provide school communities with meaningful and accessible knowledge that empowers the district and its stakeholders*

## EQUITY-CENTERED AND VISION-ALIGNED RESEARCH: STRATEGIES OF A DISTRICT RESEARCH OFFICE TO BUILD BETTER RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS, CONTINUED

*to collectively build equitable learning environments for every student in every school.* Within this conceptualization we describe the goal of research (equitable learning environments for all), how it should be carried out (collectively), and by whom (by a broad range of partners – the goal is not only to be inclusive but radically so). We believe good research is rooted in partnerships and communities and should ensure success for all, include diverse viewpoints, and respect and value lived experience. In addition, we make sure our work is aligned with district priorities by for example integrating aspects of the CPS Equity Framework into the systems and processes that drive our work. [7]



As previously mentioned, we place great importance on research and the impact it can have, wanting research to be applicable to the district, while knowing that the research done in our district also has potential for understanding our larger, sociopolitical climate. With that impact comes responsibility, because we believe research is always political: It is not an amorphous entity but has practical consequences on policy and, even more importantly, on the actual lived experiences of our students.

We believe that research is neither neutral nor to be taken lightly or as the magical solution. We often hear district and school leaders ask “what does the research say?” with the goal of deciding the course of action based on that research. We would like to offer a caution here because what is often underneath that question is the belief that research is a magic wand, which is simply not true. Our perspective is that research doesn’t provide “the right answer.” We do not view data and methodologies as neutral or objective, and instead acknowledge the role of researcher positionality and interpretation. From this perspective, research provides the space to share learning and stories about complex issues in education. With this understanding also comes the responsibility to deeply consider what stories we need to explore; what stories we need to uncover; what stories we need to change. We believe this is important for all participants in an RPP to think about.

## EQUITY-CENTERED AND VISION-ALIGNED RESEARCH: STRATEGIES OF A DISTRICT RESEARCH OFFICE TO BUILD BETTER RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS, CONTINUED

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### WORKING WITH RPP RESEARCH PARTNERS

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From our experiences working with RPP research partners, we would like to highlight several strategies for working together and making it a valuable collaborative experience for all.

First, regular meetings play a big part in getting this work done, though the participants as well as the content of these meetings have evolved for us over time. Our meetings are composed of representatives from eight RPP institutions, which we refer to collectively as our Collaborative Research Partners. While the representatives vary in their roles, from organization leadership/principal investigators, data archivists, and operations-based research facilitators, we work to invite an expansive group of individuals who are in turn well-connected within their own institutions. These gatherings, which began as monthly data-driven convenings, shifted into strategic discussions due to the pandemic and research being necessarily halted. The discussions evolved to questions such as, “Where are we going; what are we thinking about; what are we doing; and what are we aiming towards?” These questions in turn then lead to discussions about a theory of change and a theory of action about what a given RPP research project could do in the district, and to partners’ roles in supporting those theories of change and action. Conversations about secondary / administrative data are still an integral part of these meetings, but the focus is on large questions about access and sharing, as well as the development of shared metrics around the varied and complex data sets that exist within the district.

The shift in the nature of these meetings was driven by two key RPP facilitation moves: 1) the External Research Team hosts biweekly office hours, where researchers can sign up for a short, 15-30 minute slot to tackle specific questions about data that may have otherwise taken up time during larger collective meetings and 2) the collaborative meetings are now managed by the Research Partners Manager and the embedded Data Liaison on our team which allows us to set a scope and sequence for partner engagement that prioritizes both data needs and strategic future planning. During these meetings, we set a clear objective and strive to gather meaningful feedback from our partners about External Research efforts. This feedback is then shared back with partners through improvements to our systems and methods of collaboration, such as a tracker we use to keep up with new and existing statements of work and the creation of best practice tools, such as a rubric for equity-centered research (forthcoming) and a set of considerations that we ask partners to review as they prepare to share any CPS-related findings in conferences or presentations.

We always strive for these meetings to be a space for those with differing viewpoints to contribute –this is essential to understanding what equity-centered research looks like– and to be a space for transparency as participants discuss issues such as funding or timelines. We create spaces for



## EQUITY-CENTERED AND VISION-ALIGNED RESEARCH: STRATEGIES OF A DISTRICT RESEARCH OFFICE TO BUILD BETTER RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS, CONTINUED

social engagement within the structure of Collaborative Research Partner meetings: Our quarterly research socials (NOT an oxymoron!) bring together district staff and external research partners to help build a sense of connectivity beyond the work. We openly share ongoing updates about changes in district leadership and forthcoming initiatives as appropriate, to allow each of our partners to get a clear sense of what types of research might be most beneficial for future projects. Additionally, each meeting ends with exit tickets for individual reflection for circumstances where a representative may need more time to reflect or does not feel like sharing out to the collective but can still give the External Research Team valuable feedback.

At our office, we emphasize the need to expand the definition of who gets to be a research partner. We want to move away from thinking of teachers and principals and students and families as research subjects and instead think of them as equally qualified research partners. What that requires, however, is engagement with all these different groups to understand what their needs and priorities are, what their level of knowledge is, and what skills they have or need or want. In other words, they need outreach, which takes time and resources in terms of both staff and money. It is a slow process, but one that is incredibly important for building the foundational relationships with our expansive research ecosystem.

In 2022, when Samhitha started her role as Research Partners Manager, we began a research use survey series to get a sense of how different groups affiliated with our office use and think about research in their work. In the first iteration of this survey, directed at CPS district Central Office staff, we found out that a majority of our nearly 250 respondents were interested in hearing directly from researchers. Thus, we began the “Conversations with Researchers” series, bi-monthly lunch-and-learn sessions where various research partners join CPS staff to present research findings on topics that are interesting and relevant to a wide range of individuals. Our largest sessions have had up to 100 attendees, yet still offered a low-stakes way to ask questions and get engaged with the work of external researchers. After each session, Samhitha gathers feedback that has spoken to the benefit of this low-lift engagement effort: district staff asked to be connected directly with researchers for further engagement, joined our Research Review Board committee, and even brought their own research questions to share with us! In summer of 2023, we shared a parallel survey with school leaders and found that many principals and assistant principals were engaged in research of their own and needed support from our team in navigating the research review process. We shared the findings from this survey with the CPS Department of Principal Quality, allowing the staff that work most closely with our school leaders to make decisions about how research findings are shared and presented. Currently, we are analyzing findings from a teacher research use survey (co-designed with and fielded by Dr. Eve L. Ewing) and working closely with the CPS Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) to create data literacy programming for a group of parent leaders who expressed interest in continuing to work with us. From each of these surveys, our goal is to implement actionable steps to not just hear

## EQUITY-CENTERED AND VISION-ALIGNED RESEARCH: STRATEGIES OF A DISTRICT RESEARCH OFFICE TO BUILD BETTER RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS, CONTINUED

from our broader school community but to support members of these groups in accessing research by addressing learning needs.

### THE ROLE OF THE RPP

In order to examine our district research leader perspective on what makes productive and sustainable RPPs, we offer a brief example of our work with the Chicago Alliance for Equity in Computer Science (CAFÉCS), one of the RPPs we are participating in and working with at the External Research Office. In this example, we hope to highlight key facets of district-focused RPP work.

To us, CAFÉCS is an example of an RPP that fits a rigorous definition of good partnership, for several reasons. First, the RPP research is co-designed closely with district staff to meet the existing needs and inform strategy. The RPP engages in a problem solving cycle oriented around an issue facing the Department of Computer Science [8]. The research plan is adjusted based on what the district is needing and wondering about, rather than on some strict predetermined plan. For example, when staff in the Department of Computer Science realized that there was a racial gap in terms of who was taking computer science courses and who wasn't, CAFÉCS immediately focused on supporting the district in addressing this problem, asking questions about the kinds of professional learning, resources, and other supports for teachers that might make sense and engaging in pilot projects to address this need. The CAFÉCS team prioritizes the district's needs first, so the grants that they receive feel invisible to the district research department. That is actually remarkable and very different from what districts usually see when they partner with external researchers.

Secondly, the above-mentioned research on professional learning for teachers showcases another feature we'd like to note about the partnership: The way the partnership thinks about connections across the different parts of the educational system. Instead of only focusing on student outcomes, CAFÉCS looks much further upstream at what generates those student outcomes, considering classroom and school practices that inform the student experience. The RPP's operational thinking goes beyond the surface of a school's need to offer computer science and improve student outcomes; it extends to building teachers' capacities to effectively teach computer science to all students. CAFÉCS is not just thinking about programs for students, but also about the needs of the teachers and the schools, as well as the resources required to meet those needs.

Lastly, CAFÉCS is committed to bringing teachers into the design team and the conversations and .



## EQUITY-CENTERED AND VISION-ALIGNED RESEARCH: STRATEGIES OF A DISTRICT RESEARCH OFFICE TO BUILD BETTER RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS, CONTINUED

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also includes other members of the the community, including students, into their research space. For example, each year, CAFÉCS holds an in-person symposium that celebrates and includes the voices of students, teachers, district staff, university partners, and researchers in the joint effort to ensure that all students in CPS participate in rigorous and engaging computing experiences. [9] At the symposium, graduate research fellows present findings from summer research projects informed by district questions, alongside CPS students and their teachers telling their stories. As attendees of this event, the External Research Team saw the ways in which CAFÉCS meaningfully brought together all of these communities, aligning with our vision for research that invests in the next generation of researchers and their capacity to engage in collaborative research, and mentoring graduate students into creating the type of research that is directly applicable to the district needs. This approach helps build much-needed capacity in a sustainable and engaged way.

### CHALLENGES OF DOING RPP WORK IN A DISTRICT RESEARCH OFFICE

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We close by turning to the challenges we are still facing in doing this kind of RPP work in a district research office. Our biggest struggle in our role is the space between strategy and vision and implementation – how do we get to where we want to go when the relational and operational aspect of this work takes significant time and the district team is small? Put simply, right now we don't have the resources we need to fully implement our vision of equity-centered and visionaligned research. With limited resources and capacity, it has been hard to demonstrate the value-add of the strategic work that our team is doing and the value-add of the partnership work that we are doing with our partners. To get more resources, we need to be able to show how partnership translates into value for the district, but without sufficient resources, it becomes harder to do so.

One step toward this effort is a recent collaborative grant with our partners at [NORC](#) to help us document key tools in democratizing research use at Chicago Public Schools to allow both district staff and researchers to better integrate their work. RPPs can and should play a key role in helping district research teams disseminate not only research findings, but information about district processes, to a wider audience. We encourage other district research offices to document and share useful practices that support fundamental shifts in ways of working towards equity-centered and vision-aligned research. The [NNERPP](#) community can be a source of support and a resource for district research offices to learn from other teams engaged in these efforts.

### CONCLUSION

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To us, if done right, RPPs offer a promising way forward in doing equity-centered research rooted



## EQUITY-CENTERED AND VISION-ALIGNED RESEARCH: STRATEGIES OF A DISTRICT RESEARCH OFFICE TO BUILD BETTER RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS, CONTINUED

in school needs. We think district research leaders play an important role in supporting these efforts, but this requires new ways of doing business. We have shared our journey here to change the ways in which the external research office engages and supports research-side and practice-side RPP teams. We have found that this work takes time and comes with many challenges, including the need for all partners to have a balanced view of what research is and is not, and the need for all partners to embrace ways of working together that are not extractive but truly rooted in partnership and acknowledgment of everyone's expertise. When these basic conditions are fulfilled, our own experience shows us that partnering with external researchers in an RPP can be truly beneficial for districts and the communities they serve.

*Samhitha Krishnan is Research Partners Manager at [Chicago Public Schools](#); Sarah Dickson is Director of External Research at Chicago Public Schools; and Erin Henrick is President of [Partner to Improve](#) and Co-Director of the [Nashville Partnership for Educational Equity Research \(PEER\)](#).*

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# RPP 101: UNDERSTANDING IMPORTANT RPP BASICS

Kim Wright and Nina Spitzley | NNERPP

Are you new to research-practice partnerships (RPPs) and aren't sure where to start? Or do you need a refresher on the most up-to-date thinking on RPPs?

These are the questions we posed when launching our RPP 101 Workshop Series this April. In this five-part online series led by NNERPP Director Paula Arce-Trigatti, we invited anyone who is new to or curious about working in an education RPP to join us in an overview of five important topics that help us understand what RPPs are all about and where we are as a field in our thinking on RPPs.

We had an amazing crew of current and future

RPPers join us, from research-side folks interested in deepening their research collaboration with community and K-12 practice-facing agencies to education leaders curious about working in partnership with external collaborators! Here, we share a brief overview of the topics we examined together and then highlight an artifact we created as a result of these conversations, which we hope may be useful to your own RPP efforts as well, particularly if you're new to partnership work. If that's you and you missed this series – we plan to launch another round this fall, so please keep an eye out for that!

### FIVE IMPORTANT TOPICS FOR UNDERSTANDING RPPs

Here are the five topics we pondered together throughout our workshop series and why they might be important to think about for anyone seeking to understand and engage in RPP work.

- **What is an RPP?** In our first session, *What is an RPP?*, we explored the “core DNA” that make up [the current definition of research-practice partnerships](#), which include: (1) a long-term collaboration, (2) an aim of educational improvement or transformation, (3) engagement with research, (4) involvement of diverse forms of expertise, (5) an intentional shifting of power relations, and (6) joint work. Participants had an opportunity to consider how each of the core DNA might show up in their partnerships, now or in the future. We were thrilled to have guest speaker and “real-life RPPer” Alyn Turner join us, as she shared her experiences in her role as the research-side partner of the [Research for Action + Philadelphia Education Research Consortium](#).
- **Sustaining Your Partnership:** Our second session centered around the RPP Sustainability Framework (coming soon!), which is a comprehensive framework for thinking about the long-term sustainability of RPPs, co-created by the NNERPP community. The framework addresses four dimensions: financial sustainability, relational sustainability, goal alignment, and infrastructure. Following an introduction to each dimension, we were excited to be joined by real-life RPPers Andy Rasmussen ([Chicago Public Schools](#), [Chicago Alliance For Equity in Computer Science \(CAFÉCS\)](#)) and Jesse Senechal ([Institute for Collaborative Research and Evaluation](#) and the [Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium at Virginia Commonwealth University](#)), who shared their experiences with sustainability in their long-term partnerships.
- **Building Strong Relationships:** In the third session, we focused our time together around thinking about how to build strong relationships to support RPP work. Because relationship development in RPPs frequently involves building *onto* existing relationships or working together in very new ways, three key ideas framed the conversation: (1) how do you *initiate a new relationship* with an eye on building a strong future relationship, (2) how do you *strengthen an existing relationship*, and (3) how do you *repair a relationship* that may not be in a good spot? Participants used the guiding questions in the [Collaborative Education Research Collective’s \(2023\) framework](#) to think about the specific ways in which their individual and institutional ways of “showing up” to RPP work might have to change in order to build, strengthen, and repair relationships. This round, we were pumped to have real-life RPPers Rachel Ruggirello of the [Institute for School Partnership at Washington University in St. Louis](#) and Jess Bailey of [REL Northeast and Islands at EDC](#) to share how they build relationships in their RPPs through very intentional work.
- **Milestones for New RPPs:** The fourth



RPP 101 session introduced participants to the [Milestones Guide for Emerging RPPs](#) (released in late 2023), which aims to support new RPP teams as they think together about their first year of work. In particular, the tool invites teams to reflect on early stage milestones (things to focus on) and stumbling blocks (things to watch out for), as identified by the NNERPP community given their own first year RPP experiences. After participants had an opportunity to reflect on the relevance of each milestone and stumbling block to their context, real-life RPPer Laura Wentworth of [California Education Partners](#) and the [Stanford-San Francisco Unified School District Partnership](#) shared from her own experience one of the most helpful milestones her RPP achieved in its first year: Producing an “early win,” that is, a smaller-scope early project that demonstrates the potential of the partnership to its members and possible funders.

- **RPP Effectiveness:** In our final session, we shared the recently released [Indicators of Research-Practice Partnership Health and Effectiveness](#) and the [RPP Health and Effectiveness Toolkit](#) that NNERPP co-developed with our colleague Erin Henrick from Vanderbilt University and the team at the [National Center for Research in Policy and Practice \(NCRPP\)](#). Participants had an opportunity to share their noticings and wonderings about the five dimensions of RPP health and effectiveness, which include (1) cultivating trust and relationships, (2) engaging in inclusive research or inquiry around local needs, (3) supporting practice or community partners in making towards their goals, (4) engaging with the broader field to improve educational practices, systems, and inquiry, and (5) fostering ongoing learning and developing partnership infrastructure.



## RPP 101: UNDERSTANDING IMPORTANT RPP BASICS, CONTINUED

### RPP 101 FAQ: A SAMPLER

Throughout this series, we received tons of great questions from participants about certain aspects of the work. In response, we created a running list of FAQs by session for attendees. Because the strength of NNERPP lies in the collective wisdom of our members, most of the questions were answered with resources written or shared by our members, including articles and tools from the following sources: (1) the [NNERPP Knowledge Clearinghouse](#), a curated collection of resources from across the RPP space, (2) [Brokering in Education Research-Practice Partnerships](#), an open source guide with over 50 real-life cases and tools related to RPP brokering, (3) articles from [NNERPP Extra](#), our quarterly magazine on all things RPP, (4) our [members' RPP websites](#), and recently released tools co-created with the NNERPP community, including the [Milestones for Emerging RPPs](#) and the [RPP Health and Effectiveness Toolkit](#).

Here, we share [a sampler "RPP 101" FAQ](#) for you to explore, meant to be helpful for anyone, regardless of whether you joined us for the workshop series. It addresses the following questions about understanding the concept of RPPs:

- What is an RPP?
- What are some specific examples of RPP work in practice?
- Are there PhD programs or universities where PhD students can participate in RPPs?
- Who defines the roles of an RPP, especially when many people sit at the intersection of researcher and practitioner?

- What are some specific examples of RPP work in practice?

We invite you to explore our responses to these questions [here](#) and share the FAQ with anyone in your circles who might be interested. And, if you have other questions about RPPs and RPPing not included in this round of FAQ, please feel free to [reach out to us](#) with questions you'd like to see answered in a future FAQ!

### CONCLUSION

We had a blast thinking about what it means "to RPP" with folks in various stages of dreaming about, starting up, continuing, or even resetting research-practice partnerships in education. Just like education contexts, research-practice partnerships are constantly evolving and it was a gift for our NNERPP team to hold space to wonder with current and future RPPers about partnership work. If you'd like to join in on these conversations, we hope to see you in the fall for RPP 101 2.0!

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# IMPROVING IMPROVEMENT: SHIFTING OUR PERSPECTIVES OF THE TIME IT TAKES TO ENGAGE IN IMPROVEMENT WORK

By Amber Humm Patnode | Proving Ground



This is the eleventh installment of [\*Improving Improvement\*](#), our quarterly series focused on leveraging the power of research-practice partnerships (RPPs) to build schools', districts', and states' capacity to improve. In our [most recent article](#), we shared how we support districts to meaningfully connect with students and families to inform improvement work. In this installment, we are revisiting and reflecting on the most frequently reported barrier to improvement work: insufficient time. This is a topic we previously wrote about in a [2022 installment](#), where we discussed working with partners to identify and let go of inefficient or ineffective work to instead make space for cost-effective, vision-aligned, and impactful efforts. Here, we examine this barrier from a different perspective.

Within the context of a larger survey of our current and past partners focused on better understanding how their partnership with us has improved their capacity to engage in continuous improvement, we are in the process of more closely examining time as a barrier. We began using the survey in 2022, which you can read more about in [this](#) article – this data collection is part of our own continuous improvement work to ensure that we are supporting partners in the best possible way. The survey asked partners their perceived value of the specific tools and activities used in the [Proving Ground model](#) as well as the overall value of partnership in developing their continuous improvement skills. Preliminary data were consistent with prior responses, with over 90% of participants reporting that the Proving Ground process better equipped them to engage in improvement work. Participants named the thoroughness, deliberate focus, and support provided for the steps in the process as strengths — and the time required to engage in each step as the primary limitation or barrier. Upon seeing this data, we decided to collect additional information from four of our recent cohorts (which represent our most time-intensive service delivery model)

## SHIFTING OUR PERSPECTIVES OF THE TIME IT TAKES TO ENGAGE IN IMPROVEMENT WORK, CONTINUED

to dig deeper into the question: How much time are partners actually spending on Proving Ground-related improvement work? This may get us closer to understanding how much time is too much time, and why?

### HOW PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADS SPEND THEIR TIME

We asked a sample of district team leads in the four cohorts about the amount of time their team spent working on the steps and/or activities in the Proving Ground process between individual district and whole-group cohort sessions in the first partnership year (the first year being our most time-intensive year with whole group session occurring every 4-6 weeks). In addition to the district-reported time spent working between sessions, we calculated the amount of time each cohort spent in the whole-group sessions and one-on-one district check-ins that occurred between each session. There was some variation between the cohorts in the number of whole-group sessions in the first year (six or seven sessions) as well the amount of time spent per whole-group session (six or seven hours of scheduled time). Below is a breakdown of time spent by districts in their first partnership year:

- 36-49 hours spent in whole group cohort sessions that took place every 4-6 weeks
- 7 hours spent in one-on-one check-ins with the PG team in-between the whole group sessions to answer any questions the team may have encountered while working in-between sessions and ensure they are ready to continue the work in the upcoming whole group session
- 21 hours spent working on PG pilot planning steps between the whole group sessions (reported median and modal response of 3 hours was spent between each session)

When aggregated, the amount of time district teams spent on Proving Ground-related activities in the first year totals 64-77 hours – less than two full eight-hour day work weeks. This represents 3.1-4.3% of available working (contract) time, which is often an underrepresentation of hours actually worked by district and building administrators. This estimate is based on the typical district and building administrator contracts, which are longer than teacher or itinerant staff contracts, and best represent those participating on the district team working with Proving Ground.

In initial reflection, less than two weeks or up to 4% of time spent in understanding and planning to address big problems of practice doesn't seem like a big ask. However, we wondered if a key way to interpret the significance of this amount of time may be asking, "in comparison to what?". Thus, we went back to some of our district partner leads [1] to verify the data, get their perspectives, and identify other common activities that school or district staff engage in over the course of a year and the corresponding amounts of time as reference points. Here are some activities and associated lengths of time they shared with us:

## SHIFTING OUR PERSPECTIVES OF THE TIME IT TAKES TO ENGAGE IN IMPROVEMENT WORK, CONTINUED

- 90+ hours are spent in district Cabinet meetings each year
- Approximately 80 hours a year are spent in preparing presentations for school board meetings
- 30+ hours are spent in school faculty meetings annually (not including prep time or follow-up activities post-meeting)
- 10 hours annually spent on required Human Resource trainings

The examples cited above largely represent mandatory events focused on conveying or receiving information to or from someone relative to work, activities, or events that have been or will be done as well as expectations. One district Lead described these as “housekeeping” or transactional activities as opposed to time spent in innovative and collaborative problem-solving to address adaptive problems that require novel solutions.



I recently read the [\*Right Kind of Wrong: The Science of Failing Well\*](#), and recognized that the steps in our model have many parallels with Amy Edmondson’s concepts of taking “intelligent risks” and as necessary learning from “intelligent failure” when attempting to solve adaptive challenges that require novel solutions. According to Edmondson, taking intelligent risks or learning from intelligent failure may take longer than other decision-making processes due to information gathering, processing, and planning and are characterized by actions that are:

- Aimed at achieving a goal
- Situated in new territory where novel strategies are required
- Driven by a hypothesis, informed by available information, and that the strategy is likely to work
- No bigger than they have to be to gain insights

In addition to taking intelligent risks, Edmondson notes that we also have to prevent basic failures (those due to carelessness or ignorance) and as often as possible predict and mitigate complex failures (those due to multiple causes that alone would not have resulted in failure). The steps our partners take are aligned with this concept of taking intelligent risks and learning from an



## SHIFTING OUR PERSPECTIVES OF THE TIME IT TAKES TO ENGAGE IN IMPROVEMENT WORK, CONTINUED

intelligent failure while attempting to prevent basic failures through, for example, identifying key implementation activities, the resources, professional learning and capacity, and communication protocols necessary to implement well. We also guide our partners in predicting, scanning for, and mitigating complex failure through incorporating user-centered design strategies, engaging in communication planning, and developing implementation monitoring tools. Time spent on intelligent risk taking and planning for preventing and mitigating failure as opposed to equivalent time spent in more transactional activities seems less burdensome and a strategic approach to allow for organizational learning. Going forward, this may be a helpful framing for us to share with our partners.

### UNDERSTANDING PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADS' PERCEPTIONS OF TIME

In addition to asking the district leads questions to better contextualize and understand time spent in PG activities to answer “in comparison to what?”, we also asked their perceptions about the extent to which they perceived the time spent as “too much” and their ideas about why others may feel it is too much of a time commitment.

Relative to their perceptions of time, the leads we spoke with indicated they personally did not feel it was too much, and that the structure and time requirements for PG did not differ from time spent with other RPPs or external consultants. However, they did offer insights as to why others may perceive it to be. Their responses clustered into three main themes: perceptions of alignment, logistics, and frenzy culture.

**Alignment.** The perceptions of alignment were interesting in that multiple leads hypothesized that across teams, participants may not view the improvement work they engage in with PG as directly aligned to work they already are/will or “should” be doing. The majority of districts applied to join a cohort partnering with us and as part of the application, teams are asked to specify how this will support district priorities, initiatives, and workstreams. This makes us wonder to what extent the perceived alignment referenced in the district’s application is being communicated to all team members. If team members perceive the time spent working on improvement activities with PG is in addition to rather than in support of important and/or mandatory work, it is not surprising that it may be viewed as overly burdensome or even a distraction.

**Logistics.** Setting aside six hours of a day every four to six weeks is a logistical challenge for many team members. This is often complicated by the fact that while they are otherwise occupied, many are participating from their respective offices and appear physically available/present, resulting in multiple disruptions throughout the day. In addition to unanticipated disruptions, there are often building or district-level meetings that are scheduled concurrently that staff members may feel compelled to attend due to proximity. The district leads shared that team members engage in

## SHIFTING OUR PERSPECTIVES OF THE TIME IT TAKES TO ENGAGE IN IMPROVEMENT WORK, CONTINUED

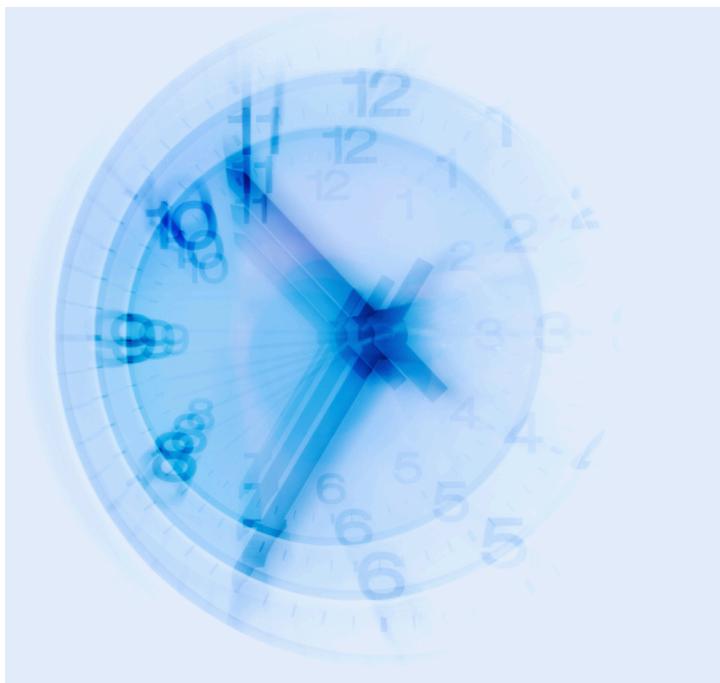
varying levels of communication with building and district-level colleagues regarding their availability during session times which creates competition for their time and attention and pressure to select a priority.

**Frenzy Culture.** Of particular note, multiple leads identified that the deliberate pacing and steps in the PG improvement process is often at odds with the frenzied pace that educators have become accustomed to. Quotes from different leads exemplified the current reality from both a global perspective and specifically for building principals:

"As education leaders we have become programmed to be fast and furious. Finding ways to slow down and think through things can be difficult."

"Given how much comes at a building principal and how many decisions they have to make in the span of a single day [to perform their job well], the shift to a more slow and deliberate process in the course of a year would be jarring."

Both of these quotes highlight that the speed of decision-making to which many education leaders have had to adapt to is dramatically different than the PG process where they are asked to consider multiple perspectives and data sources to formulate hypotheses and select strategies as well as extensively plan implementation in a way that will support intelligent risk-taking.



## SHIFTING OUR PERSPECTIVES OF THE TIME IT TAKES TO ENGAGE IN IMPROVEMENT WORK, CONTINUED

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### CREATING MORE TIME: EXISTING PRACTICES TO CREATE EFFICIENCIES

Based on partner feedback over the years at Proving Ground, we have evolved our actions to try to lessen time burdens and maximize working time for our partners by creating efficiencies where possible. These include:

- Consulting each district's academic calendar prior to the start of a cohort to identify the most optimal session dates for the entire year and sending calendar invites to hold those dates prior to cohort launch
- Encouraging district teams (who are already in the same locale) to gather together in the same place during whole group sessions to maximize their collaboration -- because we (our Proving Ground staff) meet virtually with district teams due to time demands and cost, this has implications for facilitation and overall group activities that we design
- Encouraging teams to the largest extent possible to find a location, offsite if necessary, to meet during whole group and working sessions where they are least likely to be disrupted and can have focused time together
- Creating large blocks of time (3-4 hours) during the whole group sessions where teams have dedicated time to work collaboratively on the next step in their improvement process with a PG facilitator available to provide coaching support as needed
- Scheduling their one-on-one check-in while they are in the whole group session to avoid unnecessary later email exchanges
- Offering the option to reduce the session length by one hour for cohorts as needed (which has the cumulative effect of one less day in the first year), while acknowledging that this will increase the amount of time they will need to spend outside of sessions to complete activities
- Sending consistent reminders for upcoming sessions, recapping next steps, and resources to locate and access all materials in a predictable and clear format

### CREATING MORE TIME: FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

Beyond the steps we have taken to create efficiencies in our request and usage of partners' time, we need to do more to address this real and perceived barrier. One wondering we have is how to better frame the work as an investment rather than an expenditure. The problems of practice our partners select to focus on are predominantly aligned with district and or state priorities, many of which they specifically name in their partnership application. Suggesting that this is intensive and contextually relevant work they would, regardless of partnership with Proving Ground, spend precious amounts of time upon might be an important lens. In addition, these problems are predominantly adaptive challenges, where there is high uncertainty about the best way to address

## SHIFTING OUR PERSPECTIVES OF THE TIME IT TAKES TO ENGAGE IN IMPROVEMENT WORK, CONTINUED

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them, which necessitates experimentation and the process of intelligent risk-taking Edmondson references. Perhaps framed through the lens of experimentation and intelligent risk-taking coupled with continued efforts on our part to reduce unnecessary time burdens, we can support districts in viewing the time they spend engaging in planful improvement efforts as investments in the bank of a desired future state rather than withdrawals.

### LOOKING AHEAD

In the next installment, we will share findings from our most recent partner survey and our reflections on our own improvement work over time and future directions.

[1] The author would like to express gratitude to the following individuals for their insights and thought partnership in the development of this article: Matthew Berkshire, Chastity Trumpower, and Carrie Conaway.

*Amber Humm Patnode is Acting Director of [Proving Ground](#).*



# RESEARCH HEADLINES FROM **NNERPP MEMBERS**

## ARTS EDUCATION

### **HOUSTON EDUCATION RESEARCH CONSORTIUM**

examines equity in art course taking across Houston ISD high schools

### **ILLINOIS WORKFORCE AND EDUCATION RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE**

examines the careers of arts graduates in Illinois and the U.S.

## COMPUTER SCIENCE

### **ILLINOIS WORKFORCE AND EDUCATION RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE**

examines the computer science education landscape in Illinois

## COURSE-TAKING

### **TENNESSEE EDUCATION RESEARCH ALLIANCE**

examines Tennessee's AP access for all program

## CRIME

### **UCHICAGO CONSORTIUM**

examines the role of schools in mitigating the academic impacts of proximity to homicide

## CTE

### **GEORGIA POLICY LABS**

examines

- the collection of work-based learning data across five states and its impact on CTE policy
- who takes high-earning CTE pathways

### **HOUSTON EDUCATION RESEARCH CONSORTIUM**

examines career and technical education alongside the STEM endorsement in the Houston area

## DIGITAL LEARNING

### **CENTER FOR EDUCATION EFFICACY, EXCELLENCE, AND EQUITY (E4) AT NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY**

examines

- how students use digital learning materials
- elementary school teachers' modification of digital learning tools

## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

### **EDUCATION POLICY INNOVATION COLLABORATIVE**

examines patterns in retention and exemption decisions during the three years of the Read by Grade Three law

### **MADISON EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP**

provides a post-project update on research on the transition to kindergarten

## ENGLISH LEARNERS

### **CENTER FOR EDUCATION EFFICACY, EXCELLENCE, AND EQUITY (E4) AT NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY**

examines

- the evolution of states' EL reclassification policies
- how English Learner reclassification policies vary across states

### **GEORGIA POLICY LABS**

examines the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on English Learners

## **TENNESSEE EDUCATION RESEARCH ALLIANCE**

examines the schooling experiences of English Learners in four Tennessee school districts

## EQUITY

### **DIGITAL PROMISE**

examines

- how the co-creation of solutions by district-community teams fosters empowerment among participants
- factors supporting district-community co-research and co-design

## HOUSING

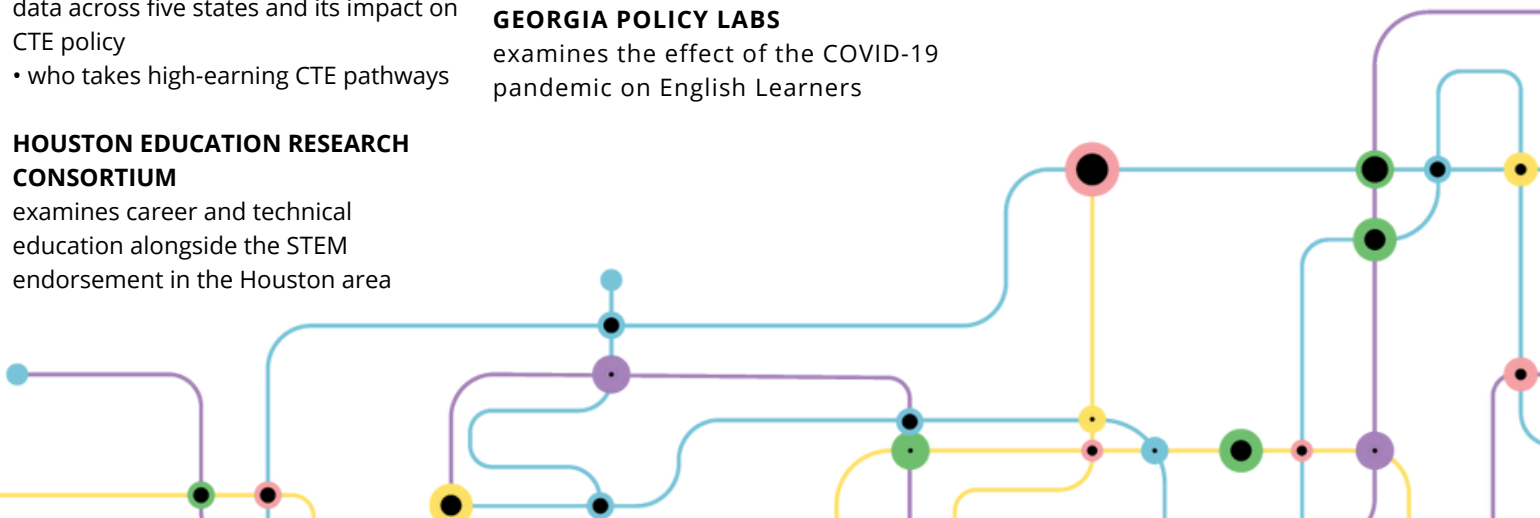
### **EDUCATION NORTHWEST**

examines the effects of a housing choice voucher program for students experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity

## LITERACY AND READING

### **METROPOLITAN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH CONSORTIUM**

examines the Virginia Literacy Act



# RESEARCH HEADLINES FROM **NNERPP MEMBERS**

## MATH

### **CENTER FOR EDUCATION EFFICACY, EXCELLENCE, AND EQUITY (E4) AT NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY**

examines

- trends in mathematics outcomes in grade 1 through grade 2
- how digital platforms provide individualized learning experiences in math

## POSTSECONDARY

### **EDUCATION NORTHWEST**

examines the role of community colleges in preparing and connecting students to careers in the digital economy

## COVID-19

### **GEORGIA POLICY LABS**

examines the pandemic's impact on student achievement growth during SY 2022-23

## RESEARCH APPROACHES

### **GARDNER CENTER**

examines youth participatory action research as a multidimensional strategy for organizational learning, field building, and youth development

## SCHOOL CLIMATE

### **REL MID-ATLANTIC**

examines the validity and reliability of the Pennsylvania school climate survey for elementary school students

### **UCHICAGO CONSORTIUM**

examines what happened when Chicago Public Schools began removing school resource officers from its high schools

## SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

### **PRIME CENTER ST. LOUIS UNIVERSITY**

examines inequities in out-of-school suspensions in Missouri

### **UCHICAGO CONSORTIUM**

summarizes findings on school discipline for families

## STUDENT MOBILITY

### **PRIME CENTER ST. LOUIS UNIVERSITY**

examines student mobility across Missouri

## SUMMER LEARNING

### **HOUSTON EDUCATION RESEARCH CONSORTIUM**

examines summer school retention and course failure rates

## TEACHERS

### **DIGITAL PROMISE**

examines the impact of recruitment and retention solutions designed by teachers of color

### **EDUCATION POLICY INNOVATION COLLABORATIVE**

examines recent trends and the current state of teacher compensation in Michigan

### **ILLINOIS WORKFORCE AND EDUCATION RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE**

examines educator shortages in Illinois for the 2023-24 academic year

## OFFICE FOR EDUCATION POLICY

examines professional learning communities and student outcomes in Arkansas schools



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