



SCHOOL BOARD ACTION REPORT

DATE: October 2, 2020
FROM: Denise Juneau, Superintendent
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For Introduction: November 18, 2020
For Action: December 2, 2020

1. TITLE

Approval of the 2020-21 District Educational Research & Program Evaluation Plan.

2. PURPOSE

This Board Action Report introduces the 2020-21 District Educational Research & Program Evaluation Plan for formal review and approval by the School Board.

3. RECOMMENDED MOTION

I move that the Board approve the 2020-21 District Educational Research & Program Evaluation Plan, as attached to the Board Action Report.

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

a. Background

Substantial revisions to Board Policy No. 2090 were approved by the School Board in December 2018. Consistent with the revised policy, the District has made substantive changes to its annual educational research and evaluation processes, prioritizing a number of different types of studies that contribute to the continuous improvement of programs and initiatives aligned to District strategic goals and objectives. The revised Policy No. 2090 detailed two elements of the program evaluation and review process:

- 1) The District shall submit to the School Board an annual District Educational Research and Program Evaluation Plan for formal approval each year; and
- 2) The District shall annually report to the School Board findings pertaining to each study included in the Plan.

Consistent with the revised policy, the District has developed and attached to this Board Action Report the 2020-21 District Educational Research and Program Evaluation Plan for review and approval by the School Board.

b. Alternatives

Not applicable. The policy requires the Superintendent to submit to the School Board a District Educational Research and Program Evaluation Plan for approval each year.

c. Research

To inform revisions to Policy No. 2090, the District engaged in a 2016-17 pilot of new processes and procedures for research and evaluation. This pilot year, which was conducted with guidance from the School Board, began with a systematic review of other Districts' research policies and practices. Building upon these initial efforts, the District has in subsequent years developed its processes for conducting evaluation studies consistent with Board priority goals and District objectives for improving its educational programs.

Consistent with Policy 2090, the District is committed to leveraging rigorous research and evaluation to support evidence-based decision making, continuous improvement, and public transparency and accountability. In order to meet these goals and to further develop its internal competencies for conducting evaluation studies, the District continues to consult with School Board Directors, District and school leaders, community partners, and expert outside researchers in developing its annual plan for research and evaluation.

5. FISCAL IMPACT/REVENUE SOURCE

Fiscal impact to this action will be **none**, beyond the current staffing of the Research & Evaluation Department. The revenue source for this motion is **not applicable**.

Expenditure: One-time Annual Multi-Year N/A

Revenue: One-time Annual Multi-Year N/A

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

With guidance from the District's Community Engagement tool, this action was determined to merit the following tier of community engagement:

Not applicable

Tier 1: Inform

Tier 2: Consult/Involve

Tier 3: Collaborate

In developing the 2020-21 Plan, the Research & Evaluation Department conducted initial outreach and engagement involving district staff, community stakeholders, and outside research partners. With guidance from the District's Community Engagement Toolkit, the action to develop the 2020-21 Plan was determined to merit the *Tier 2: Consult/Inform* level of community engagement. Outreach for this engagement is ongoing and has to date included consultation with District staff and stakeholders that represent families and communities.

Community stakeholders who were engaged (to date) in developing the 2020-21 Plan include:

- Erin Okuno, Executive Director, Southeast Seattle Education Coalition
- Marquita Prinzing, Director, SEA Center for Racial Equity
- Shelby Cooley, Research Director, Community Center for Education Results
- Min Sun, Assistant Professor, University of Washington College of Education
- Zithri Saleem, Contractor (Lead for Superintendent Task Force on School Reopening)

Note: additional external engagement is still planned during the month of October 2020, and will be documented in this BAR prior to Board Intro on November 18, 2020

Senior District staff who were engaged (to date) in developing the 2020-21 Plan include:

- Diane DeBacker, Chief Academic Officer
- Keisha Scarlett, Chief of Equity, Partnerships and Engagement
- Concie Pedroza, Chief of Student Support Services
- Wyeth Jessee, Chief of Schools and Continuous Improvement
- Mia Williams, Executive Director, African American Male Achievement
- Cashel Toner, Executive Director, Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction
- Caleb Perkins, Executive Director, Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction
- Pat Sander, Executive Director, Coordinated School Health
- Kirk Mead, Director of Stakeholder Engagement
- Lindsay Berger, Director of Professional Growth & Evaluation, Human Resources
- Mike Simmons, Director of Talent Management, Human Resources

Following Board approval of the 2020-21 Plan, Research & Evaluation will work collaboratively to develop detailed research designs for each study *in consultation with District staff who lead the programs and initiatives to be studied*. In planning the research studies, *key District partners and community stakeholders will continue to be consulted*— including participants in Strategic Plan goal work groups, district and school-based practitioners, and outside researchers.

7. EQUITY ANALYSIS

The Racial Equity Analysis Tool was used to develop the 2020-21 District Educational Research & Program Evaluation Plan. That analysis is **attached** for reference to this Board Action Report.

8. STUDENT BENEFIT

The intent of all instructional research and evaluations is to provide actionable information regarding educational programs and initiatives, including design, implementation and outcomes so that stakeholders can improve outcomes for students.

9. WHY BOARD ACTION IS NECESSARY

- Amount of contract initial value or contract amendment exceeds \$250,000 (Policy No. 6220)
- Amount of grant exceeds \$250,000 in a single fiscal year (Policy No. 6114)
- Adopting, amending, or repealing a Board policy
- Formally accepting the completion of a public works project and closing out the contract
- Legal requirement for the School Board to take action on this matter
- Board Policy No. 2090, District Educational Research & Program Evaluation, provides the Board shall approve this item.
- Other: _____

10. POLICY IMPLICATION

Board Policy No. 2090 is implicated as discussed above.

11. BOARD COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

This motion was discussed at the October 13, 2020 Student Services, Curriculum, and Instruction Committee meeting. The Committee reviewed the motion and moved the item forward for consideration by the full Board.

12. TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION


Upon approval of this motion, detailed planning and preparations to implement the 2020-21 District Educational Research & Program Evaluation Plan will be initiated. The general timeline for research and evaluation studies included in the 2020-21 annual plan is as follows:

- Fall 2020: Detailed research plans developed for each project
- Winter/Spring 2021: Data collection activities (quantitative and qualitative)
- Spring/Summer 2021: Data analysis and report development
- Fall 2021: Final reports shared with the School Board

Formative research findings will be shared with District staff during the year to inform continuous improvement efforts. Quarterly updates on the progress of research projects will be provided to the Board Curriculum & Instruction Policy Committee and/or the full Board via Friday Memos. Final reports will be disseminated to the School Board by Fall 2021.

13. ATTACHMENTS

- Board Policy No. 2090, District Educational Research & Program Evaluation (for reference)
- 2020-21 District Educational Research & Program Evaluation Work Plan (for approval).
- Racial Equity Analysis Tool Report for Policy 2090 (for reference)

	<p style="text-align: center;">DISTRICT EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND PROGRAM EVALUATION</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Policy No. 2090 December 5, 2018 Page 1 of 1</p>
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The Board shall provide for District capacity to conduct continuous and rigorous research and evaluation focused on its educational programs, services and initiatives in order to determine the degree to which the District is successfully meeting its priority goals and objectives based on the Strategic Plan. Accordingly, the Superintendent shall provide an Annual District Educational Research and Program Evaluation Work Plan for review and approval by the School Board each year.

The Annual Plan shall include in-depth evaluation studies of specific District programs, services and initiatives. The Annual Plan may also include strategic research studies of broader educational focus not limited to specific programs or services. The Annual Plan may include projects conducted by District staff and/or by external researchers, either contracted for or in partnership with District staff.

The Superintendent shall develop the Annual Plan with input from Board Directors, and will present the Plan to the full School Board for formal approval each year. The Superintendent shall communicate key research and evaluation findings to District leadership and School Board Directors in a timely manner, and will provide a summary to the School Board of all studies in the project portfolio on an annual basis. The Superintendent or designee will develop procedures to implement this policy.

Adopted: December 2011
Revised: December 2018; July 2013
Cross Reference: 4280 and 4280SP, 2200 and 2200SP
Related Superintendent Procedure: 2090SP
Previous Policies: C40.00; C42.00; C42.01; C45.00
Legal References:

Department of Research & Evaluation

2020-21 District Educational Research & Program Evaluation Plan

Prepared for Approval by the School Board

October 2020



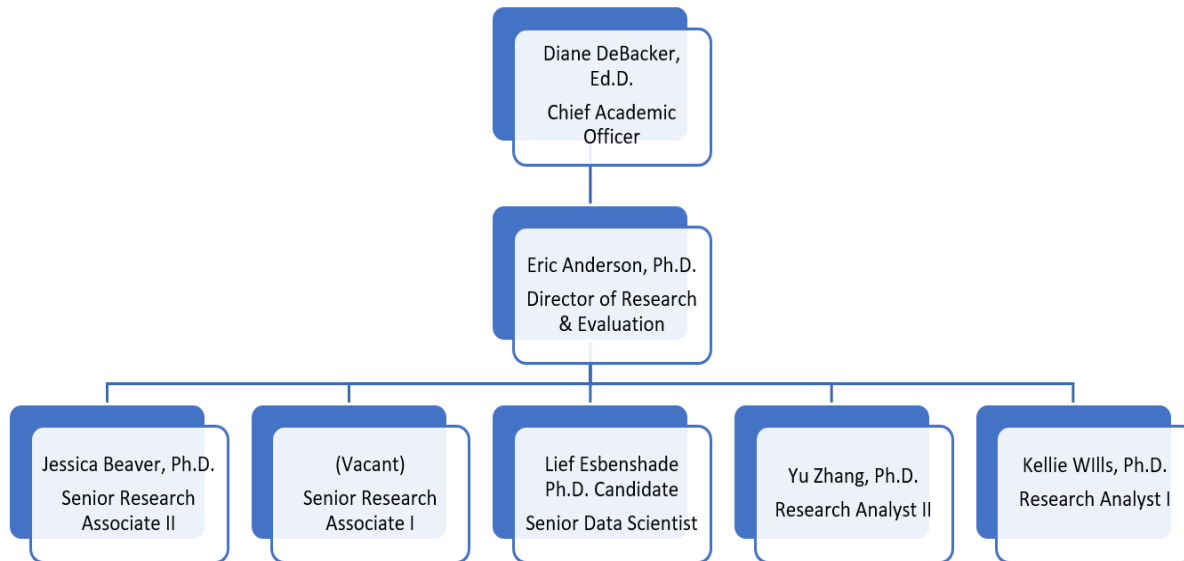
About the Department of Research and Evaluation

The mission of Research & Evaluation (R&E) is to support evidence-based decision-making, organizational learning and continuous improvement aligned to District priority goals in the Strategic Plan, *Seattle Excellence*. Consistent with *Board Policy No. 0030*, R&E is committed to Ensuring Educational and Racial Equity, and endeavors to provide research and evaluation services that support the success of every student and the District mission of ensuring that all students graduate ready for college, career and life. Research and Evaluation activities are focused on closing opportunity gaps so that every student has an equitable educational experience within Seattle Public Schools.

Department areas of responsibility include:

- **Educational Research & Program Evaluation Studies:** Consistent with *Board Policy No. 2090, District Educational Research & Evaluation*, R&E partners with district leaders, program managers, practitioners and outside researchers to conduct in-depth studies aligned to District goals.
- **Performance Measurement & Accountability:** Consistent with *Board Policy No. A02.00, Performance Management*, R&E supports the development of annual district and school performance reports for accountability and continuous improvement. Conducted in partnership with Teaching & Learning and the Business Intelligence department, this work includes reporting annually to the School Board and public on District and School progress toward Strategic Plan goals.
- **Dedicated Support for Strategic Plan Goals:** R&E team members are assigned to provide dedicated research support for each of priority goal areas specified in the Strategic Plan. This support includes defining measures and targets and providing background research and data analyses to support the work of Strategic Plan workgroups and goal leads.
- **District Surveys:** R&E is responsible for the design, administration and data reporting of districtwide surveys that support performance measurement and continuous improvement. Current surveys include school climate surveys of students, staff and families; employee engagement surveys for central office staff; community partners survey; and customer satisfaction surveys.
- **Other Department Functions:**
 - **Research Review:** Consistent with *Board Policy No. 4280, Research Activity*, R&E manages the review of external research applications, evaluating proposals to ensure they are rigorous, relevant to district priorities, and low risk and burden for study participants.
 - **Research Requests:** R&E provides on-demand research and data analysis requested by the Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer, and for other district and school leaders.
 - **Data Sharing:** R&E executes data sharing agreements and provides data to external researchers conducting formally approved research studies in partnership with SPS
 - **Technical Assistance:** R&E advises and supports central office departments seeking to conduct their own surveys, analyze data and/or evaluate their programs and initiatives.

Research & Evaluation Organization Chart for ~~2020-21~~2020-21



2020-21 District Educational Research & Program Evaluation Plan

Context for the Annual Plan

In accordance with *Board Policy No. 2090* governing educational research and program evaluation in Seattle Public Schools, the **2020-21 District Educational Research & Program Evaluation Plan** was prepared for review and approval by the School Board. The plan identifies key programs and initiatives within Seattle Public Schools that will be supported by R&E during the 2020-21 school year.

Projects & Timelines

The 2020-21 Educational Research & Program Evaluation Plan includes several multi-year projects, which are described below. This table below shows the planned duration for each project:

PROJECT	2020 21			
	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Strategic Plan 2019-2024 Evaluation				
K-5 ELA Curriculum Evaluation (CCC) **				
MS Math Curriculum Evaluation (enVision)				
K-12 Science Curriculum Evaluation				
African American Male Achievement				
Highly Capable Services ***				

** Formal evaluation completed in 2019-20. (CCC will continue to be studied as part of the 3rd grade reading Strategic Plan goal.)

*** Formerly referred to as "Detracking" research, this project is now focused on continuous improvement of HC services.

~~2020-21~~ District Educational Research & Program Evaluation Plan

Upon approval of the 2020-21 Plan by the School Board, detailed planning and preparations to implement the research and evaluation studies will be conducted in the Fall of 2020. Research & Evaluation will develop detailed research designs for each project in consultation with District staff leading the programs and initiatives to be studied. Key partners and community stakeholders will also be consulted during the planning process – including, for example, participants in Strategic Plan workgroups, District equity leaders, school-based practitioners, and outside researchers.

The general timeline for 2020-21 research and evaluation projects is as follows:

- **Fall 2020:** Detailed research plans developed for each project
- **Winter/Spring 2021:** Data collection activities (quantitative and qualitative)
- **Spring/Summer 2021:** Data analysis and report development
- **Fall 2021:** Final reports shared with the School Board

Formative research findings will be shared with District staff during the year to inform continuous improvement efforts. Quarterly updates on the progress of research projects will be provided to the Board Curriculum & Instruction Policy Committee and/or the full Board via Friday Memos. Final reports will be disseminated to the Board by Fall 2021.

Project Descriptions

Strategic Plan - Year 2

Research & Evaluation will conduct research and evaluation projects to support the **2019-2024 District Strategic Plan**. The purpose is to support ongoing systematic analysis of the implementation of Strategic Plan initiatives aligned to priority goals. In future years, we expect to employ rigorous statistical techniques to estimate the longitudinal impact of district investments on student outcomes.

Research and evaluation projects will focus principally on how district initiatives are benefitting *students of color furthest from educational justice, and especially African American male students*. Evaluations will aim to authentically incorporate the views and lived experiences of these students and their families and will employ strengths-based approaches that acknowledge the assets of communities of color.

The Year 2 projects outlined below will extend and build upon research efforts from Year 1 and continue to be centered around “Focus Goals” selected as Board priorities for 2020-21. A detailed research plan for each project will be developed collaboratively in consultation with Goal Leads and other partners and community stakeholders– including Strategic Plan workgroups and outside researchers.

Strategic Plan Focus Goal: 3rd Grade Reading

Project Supervisors: Jessica Beaver, Senior Research Associate II
Goal Lead: Cashel Toner, Executive Director, Curriculum Assessment & Instruction
Executive Sponsor: Diane DeBacker, Chief Academic Officer

Description

A priority focus goal is for *students of color furthest from education justice to read at grade level by 3rd grade*. In 2020-21, we will build off the first year of research support, and will include approaches such as design research (e.g. literature reviews, national scans, alignment to comprehensive literacy frameworks); emergent best practices in Seattle Public Schools (e.g. case studies); descriptive data analyses (e.g. student assessment data); and focused implementation studies. Planned research activities for 2020-21 are shown in the four priority areas below:

- **Engaging Families and Communities** – Continued partnership in study of the Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) program, as well as implementation study for the planned Family Connectors program.
- **Building P-3 Practitioner Capacity** – Implementation research to support the district’s investment in instructional literacy coaches.
- **Establishing a P-3 Assessment Portfolio** – Continued design and analytic support for the adoption and implementation of an aligned P-3 assessment portfolio, inclusive of the dyslexia screener as required by OSPI.
- **Establishing Early Learning Pathways** – Research support (design, descriptive work) as needed to support early learning pathways.

In all cases, emphasis will be placed on study of the 13 priority schools (selected in Spring 2019 as those school representing the greatest numbers of African American male students in grades K-3).

Strategic Plan Goal: 5th and 7th Grade Mathematics

Lead Researcher: Jessica Beaver, Senior Research Associate II
Goal Lead: Elissa Farmer, Mathematics Program Manager
Executive Sponsor: Diane DeBacker, Chief Academic Officer

Description

A new focus goal for 2020-21 is for *students of color furthest from education justice to achieve math proficiency in 5th grade and 7th grade*. The bulk of research work for mathematics currently planned for 2020-21 will focus on the MS Math curriculum adoption evaluation (described below). R&E will also partner with the Mathematics department to provide research and data analysis support for the development of goal initiatives and the future efforts of the Strategic Plan workgroup, once constituted.

Strategic Plan Goal: 9th Grade On-Track Credits

Lead Researcher: Lief Esbenshade, Senior Data Scientist
Goal Lead: Caleb Perkins, Executive Director of Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction
Executive Sponsor: Diane DeBacker, Chief Academic Officer

Description

A priority focus goal is for *Students of color who are furthest from educational justice will finish 9th grade on track for on-time graduation*. Research & Evaluation will continue to provide research and data analysis support for goal leads and Strategic Plan workgroup constituted beginning last year. A detailed work plan is still in development, but research projects for this year will likely include:

- **Credit Waivers (for 24 credit requirement)**: This research seeks to determine which students will be able to benefit from 2 credit waivers (for those who have not met the 7 elective credits) by examining credit earning by subject, grade level, demographic group, and school.

- **Academic Acceleration Policy:** This research and analysis of historical student data SPS will help shape District implementation of new State policy that will require all students who meet standard on state exams be placed into honors courses in high school.
- **Credit Accumulation (including impacts of COVID-19):** R&E will continue its analysis of semester level credit accumulation by students, including research on the impacts of COVID-19.
- **Early Warning Indicators (EWI) initiative:** R&E will build upon the design research conducted last year and begin development of an evaluation plan for the implementation of EWI systems.

Strategic Plan Goal: Safe & Welcome Schools

Lead Researcher: Eric Anderson, Director of Research & Evaluation
 Goal Lead: Pat Sander, Executive Director, Coordinated School Health
 Executive Sponsor: Wyeth Jessee, Chief of Schools and Continuous Improvement

Description

A second priority focus goal is for *students of color furthest from education justice to feel safe and welcome in school*. To meet this goal, multiple strategic investments are planned across four categories: (1) Shifting adult beliefs and practices; (2) Systems and structures to support the whole child; (3) Family and community partnerships; and (4) Equity in discipline and special education referrals. In 2020-21, we will build off the first year of research support, and plan to focus efforts on the following initiatives.

- **Promoting Adolescent Health (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention grant):** R&E will support the Health Education office in the evaluation of grant initiatives focused on sexual health education and services, and safe and supportive environments. Research activities will include analyzing data (e.g., Youth Risk Behavior Survey, school climate surveys, attendance), as well as mixed methods evaluation of professional development and new programs, including virtual health education offerings, with emphasis on supports for LGBTQ students.
- **School Climate Transformation Grant (SCTG) (US Department of Education):** The SCTG is a collaborative effort between SPS, Sound Supports, and the University of Washington SMART Center to further develop MTSS and PBIS systems for supporting students and creating safe and welcoming school climates. R&E will serve on grant planning teams and provide technical assistance and support for the grant evaluation in collaboration with external researchers.
- **School Climate Surveys:** Last year, R&E initiated the redesign of school climate surveys (students, staff, and families) to closely align to Strategic Plan goals, with emphasis on Safe & Welcome Schools. These new surveys will be critical to measuring perceptions of school climate and classroom practices. Field testing will occur this Fall/Winter in advance of annual spring surveys. R&E will prepare a technical report describing the survey design and validation process

Strategic Plan Goal: Culturally Responsive Workforce

Lead Researchers: Eric Anderson, Director of Research & Evaluation
 Professor Min Sun, University of Washington College of Education
 Goal Leads: Lindsay Berger, Director of Professional Growth & Evaluation
 Mike Simmons, Director of Talent Management
 Executive Sponsor: Clover Codd, Chief of Human Resources

Description

A third priority focus goal is for *educators to improve their culturally responsive practice to improve educational outcomes for students of color furthest from education justice*. The strategy for ensuring

staff improve culturally responsive practices has four initiatives: (1) Teacher Leader Cadre; (2) Culturally Responsive Teaching Cadre; (3) Foundational Coursework; and (4) Building Leadership Teams (BLT).

In 2020-21, we will continue to build upon last year's extensive research support provided through a collaboration with a research team from the UW College of Education. Specific research activities will include survey research, including Professional Growth Educator Supports (PGES) survey, school climate surveys (including focused questions about culturally responsive teaching), and professional developments surveys of teacher experiences with the Foundational Coursework series.

In addition, R&E and UW researchers will continue to provide in-depth research and analysis of educator diversity and retention trends, and also "working conditions" in SPS, and will also initiate a planned evaluation of district programs to recruit educators of color, with a focus on the Academy of Rising Educators (ARE) and other alternative pathway programs for becoming a teacher in SPS.

District Curriculum Adoption Evaluations

Research & Evaluation will continue to conduct multi-year evaluations of major District curriculum adoptions. The purpose is to support ongoing systematic analysis of the implementation of new curriculum across schools. Where appropriate, the evaluation studies may employ rigorous statistical techniques to estimate the longitudinal impact of district investments on student outcomes.

K-5 ELA Curriculum Adoption (Center for the Collaborative Classroom)

Lead Researcher: Jessica Beaver, Senior Research Associate II
Program Lead: Cashel Toner, Executive Director, Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction
Program Manager: Kathleen Vasquez, ELA Program Manager
Cabinet Sponsor: Diane DeBacker, Chief Academic Officer

Description

In spring 2017, the School Board approved a \$5.6 million investment in districtwide implementation of Center for the Collaborative Classroom (CCC). Research & Evaluation is partnering with Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction (CAI) in a three-year review of the curriculum. The 2019-20 school year marks the third year of implementation. In Year 3, the study will continue to examine implementation and student achievement trends, with a focus on early literacy as per the Seattle Excellence's core goal of ELA proficiency by 3rd grade for students of color furthest from educational justice, particularly African American males. Year 3 will also include a rigorous impact analysis of the curriculum on reading achievement. Deliverables include continuous improvement reporting to CAI and school leaders, updates at School Board Curriculum and Instruction Committee, and other reports as requested.

Middle School Math Curriculum Adoption (enVision)

Project Supervisor: Jessica Beaver, Senior Research Associate II
Program Lead: Cashel Toner, Executive Director, Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction
Program Manager: Elissa Farmer, Math Program Manager
Cabinet Sponsor: Diane DeBacker, Chief Academic Officer

Description

In 2018, the School Board approved a \$2 million investment in enVisionmath2.0 for grades 6-8. R&E has embarked on a three-year study of the implementation and impact of the math curriculum adoption, and the 2020-21 school year marks the third year of implementation. The study will continue the implementation work of past years, though some changes to the study plan will account for the newly upgraded "enVisionmath 2021" resources (approved by the Instructional Materials Committee in

Summer 2020), remote learning environments due to school closures, and the lack of standardized test data. Research this year will focus on implementation of the new remote learning technology tools, needed professional development supports, and student engagement. Emergent findings will be shared with the CAI department on a regular basis to inform possible shifts in planning during the year.

K-12 Science Curriculum Adoption

Project Supervisors: Jessica Beaver, Senior Research Associate II
Program Lead: Cashel Toner, Executive Director, Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction
Program Manager: MaryMargaret Welch, Science Program Manager
Cabinet Sponsor: Diane DeBacker, Chief Academic Officer

Description

In spring 2019, the School Board approved the adoption of science instructional materials for grades K-5, 6-8, and 9-12. Approval was contingent upon rigorous review and evaluation of curriculum implementation and effectiveness. Therefore, R&E is embarking on a four-year evaluation of the respective curriculum adoptions, with Years 1-3 focusing on implementation and alignment to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), progress monitoring, and descriptive reporting of student outcomes. In Year 4, we will conduct a quasi-experimental impact analysis of curriculum effectiveness. The elementary adoption study will be mainly consultative in scope, as SPS will participate in a Networked Improvement Community (NIC) with the University of Washington School of Education, as funded through the Discovery Research K-12 Grant from the National Science Foundation. The middle school and high school studies will be conducted internally by the Research & Evaluation department.

Research for the 2020-21 school year will focus on continued implementation study of the Amplify Science and various high school curricula, with specific emphasis on implementation in remote learning environments. Data collection and analysis strategies may include surveys, focus groups, and classroom observations, and analysis of student engagement and other student-level data.

Additional Research Projects

African American Male Achievement

Lead Researcher: Senior Research Associate [vacant – to be hired]
Cabinet Sponsor: Mia Williams, Chief of Office of African American Male Achievement

Description

Research & Evaluation will enhance its ongoing partnership with the Department of African American Male Achievement (AAMA) to support focused strategic efforts and to help build a comprehensive multi-year implementation and evaluation plan to ensure “Seattle Public Schools has the culture, conditions, competencies, and community connections needed for all Black and African American boys and young male students to be successful.” (AAMA website). R&E will work collaboratively with AAMA and external partners to develop and execute a multi-year research, evaluation and data plan aligned to the goals of the Department of AAMA and the priorities of Seattle Excellence. Specific activities may include: logic model development with aligned, validated key performance indicators; data collection and analysis to support planning and decision making; statistical analysis and data visualizations to identify data trends and patterns; qualitative data collection and analysis, including surveys and field research (e.g., interviews, focus groups, classroom observations, analysis of student work);

Advanced Learning/Highly Capable Services

Lead Researcher: Senior Research Associate [vacant – to be hired]
Program Manager: Deenie Berry, Advanced Learning Program Manager
Cabinet Sponsor: Concie Pedroza, Chief of Student Support Services

Description

Research & Evaluation will continue to provide background research (e.g., literature reviews, national scans) and mixed methods evaluation support for District efforts to redesign its service model for Highly Capable students. Research activities in 2020-21 will include analysis and evaluation of new assessments and processes for the identification of HC students, with emphasis on increasing program diversity and equitable access to advanced learning opportunities. In addition, R&E will support continuous monitoring and evaluation of new program models as they are developed and piloted in SPS, including, for example, Schoolwide Enrichment models and augmenting districtwide MTSS systems to ensure high achieving students receive targeted acceleration in specific subject areas based on identified needs.

Remote Learning

Lead Researchers: Research & Evaluation Team
Cabinet Sponsors: Diane DeBacker, Chief Academic Officer
Wyeth Jessee, Chief of Schools and Continuous Improvement

Description

To support evidence-based planning and continuous improvement during the pandemic, the Research & Evaluation team will provide research support for monitoring the implementation of remote learning. These efforts will be synchronized to support the **Superintendent Task Force on School Reopening**, which will convene from October 2020-June 2021 to develop key performance indicators and other tools to evaluate student outcomes, student/family engagement and satisfaction. Although a progress monitoring and evaluation plan has not yet been formally developed by the Task Force, R&E has initiated two research projects it expects will support the work of the Task Force this year:

- **Remote Learning Pulse Surveys:** R&E has developed pulse surveys that will be administered in the Fall and Winter for students, families, and staff to share their feedback on their remote learning school experience so far. Key research questions for these surveys include:
 - Are students equitably accessing instruction using technology tools?
 - Are students equitably engaged in remote learning?
 - Are families equitably informed and engaged to support remote learning?
 - Are educators adequately trained, supported and equipped to provide high quality instruction during remote learning?
- **Student Participation & Engagement in Remote Learning:** R&E is exploring the use of online learning data from districtwide platforms (e.g. Schoology, Teams, Seesaw) and from curriculum specific platforms (e.g. the Savvas platform for EnVision) to measure student participation and engagement aligned to strategic plan goals and to support ongoing curriculum evaluations. R&E has begun work with the Business Intelligence department to ensure that data from the online learning platforms are thoroughly understood and that any limitations of measures based on this data are responsibly and accurately communicated to stakeholders. Once the data is better understood and validated for research and reporting purposes, R&E anticipates it will develop specific research questions to leverage platform data for in-depth analysis.

Racial Equity Analysis Tool: Policy 2090

Step 1: Set Outcomes, Identify and Engage Stakeholders

1. What does your department/division/school define as racially equitable outcomes related to this issue?

The goal of district educational research and evaluation is to

- a. Provide a **rigorous, systematic process** for evaluating programs, services, and initiatives
- b. Produce **actionable formative data** to improve student outcomes
- c. Improve **decision-making** by deepening understanding of program and initiative design, implementation, results/outcomes, and cost/benefits.

At a broad level, racially equitable outcomes for Policy 2090 would be defined as using a conscious racial equity lens in all research and evaluation studies. In developing the **2020-21 District Educational Research & Program Evaluation Plan**, we sought to select programs and initiatives for study that are aligned to District goals to improve outcomes for *students of color furthest from educational justice* or which might benefit from deeper inquiry into effective practices for reducing racial disparities in outcomes and equitable learning experiences. In conducting the studies, we aim to disaggregate student outcomes by race/ethnicity/language learner status; and authentically center the perspectives and lived experiences of students and their families during all phases: research design, data collection, analysis, and reporting findings.

We hope to design and implement high quality studies that systematically evaluate the degree to which programs and initiatives benefit outcomes for *students of color furthest from educational justice*. Key outcomes examined will be aligned to measures specified in the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan, and may include for example: attendance, advanced course completion, test scores, graduation rates, and college-going rates. An equity-focused lens includes examining student and family perceptions of school climate and culture, and disproportionality (under-representation or over-representation) in discipline outcomes and access to services.

2. How will leadership communicate key outcomes to stakeholders for racial equity to guide analysis?

Policy 2090 stipulates that the District must engage with key stakeholders in preparing the annual District Educational Research and Evaluation Plan for review and approval by the School Board and follow up each year with an annual report of findings from approved research and evaluation projects. In developing and implementing the annual Plan, the Research & Evaluation Department will authentically engage with key stakeholders – including district leaders/staff and community partners who help guide racial equity work in Seattle Public Schools – to inform the evaluation design, including development of specific research questions, data collection and analysis, and summarizing research findings and recommendations in final reports.

3. How will leadership identify and engage stakeholders: racial/ethnic groups potentially impacted by this decision, especially communities of color, including students who are English

language learners and students who have special needs?

Research & Evaluation has close professional relationships with key District leaders and departments who provide leadership and guidance for improving racial equity – including the Department for Racial Equity Advancement (DREA), the Department of African American Achievement, and the Department for Stakeholder Engagement. Accordingly, R&E will continue to consult with leaders and staff from these departments during the research design phase and solicit feedback about how best to authentically engage key stakeholder groups for communities of color, students who are English language learners and students who have special needs. In conducting research studies, community partners will continue to be consulted– including, for example, are community members participating in Strategic Plan Workgroups.

Step 2: Engage Stakeholders in Analyzing Data

- 1. How will you collect specific information about the school, program and community conditions to help you determine if this decision will create racial inequities that would increase the opportunity gap?**

As stated above, all research and evaluation projects are aimed at providing decision-makers with research findings that inform the design and effective implementation of SPS programs and initiatives for improving student outcomes, with specific attention to outcomes for students of color furthest from educational justice. The design of evaluation research, and findings from evaluation studies, will in all cases primarily consider the impact of district programs and initiatives on eliminating opportunity gaps and ensuring equitable educational conditions for students and communities of color.

- 2. Are there negative impacts for specific student demographic groups, including English language learners and students with special needs?**

No negative impacts are anticipated for student demographic groups, including English language learners or students with special needs. We acknowledge that research which does not lead to specific actions to improve the educational experiences for students and families is of little value to stakeholders, particularly for students and families furthest from educational justice. R&E will therefore continue to promote and develop research and evaluation practices and processes that ensure research findings are used in a proactive way, and meaningful way.

Step 3: Ensuring Educational and Racial Equity

- 1. What are the potential benefits or unintended consequences?**

Policy 2090 explicitly states the commitment as a District to examine “district improvement in priority areas,” which is inclusive of the District’s commitment to eliminate opportunity gaps

and improve outcomes for students of color furthest from educational justice. There is a clear benefit to evaluating programs and initiatives that impact the quality of education for every student, and students of color furthest from educational justice, in particular.

Given limited resources for implementing program evaluation studies, it is however possible that evaluation projects may in some cases focus on programs or schools serving a comparatively high proportion of students of color (e.g., Title I schools). Ideally, the research teams implementing the studies would have adequate capacity to fully examine implementation of district programs and initiatives across the District – in *all* schools and *all* educational settings, including those that serve fewer students of color in more isolated environments.

2. What would it look like if this policy/decision/initiative/proposal ensured educational and racial equity for every student?

The intent of the 2020-21 District Educational Research & Program Evaluation Plan is to provide decision-makers with valid, reliable, and actionable information to inform the future design and improvement of programs and initiatives. The requirement under Policy 2090 to develop and implement an annual plan is intended as a *catalyst* for improved decisions in service of ensuring educational and racial equity in SPS. To be fully effective, Policy 2090 would benefit from robust funding to ensure rigorous study of all district programs and services serving all students.

Step 4: Evaluate Success Indicators and/or Mitigation Plans

1. How will you evaluate and be accountable for making sure that the proposed solution ensures educational equity for all students, families and staff?

Policy 2090 stipulates that the District must engage with the School Board to present an annual District Education Research and Evaluation Plan, and then follow up with an annual report of findings from those projects. Research & Evaluation will engage with key leaders and stakeholders for racial equity to inform the evaluation design, including data collection, analysis, and presentation of findings. These processes are detailed in Superintendent Procedure 2090SP.

2. What are specific steps you will take to address impacts (including unintended consequences), and how will you continue to partner with stakeholders to ensure educational equity for every student?

The Research & Evaluation department will continue to advocate for adequate funding to implement a robust, comprehensive District research and evaluation plan each year. As described above, a racial equity lens will guide the work during the research design and conducting research activities. R&E will continue to reach out to relevant stakeholders to help make sense of findings consistent with the District goal of improving racial equity.