Making Research Matter: Insights from Research on Research Use

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Supporting Research to Improve the Lives of Young People
to inform policy and practice
Rigorous Scientific Inquiry

- Early research
- Theory
  - Explanatory frameworks
  - Testable propositions
- Empirical Rigor
  - Research design
  - Methods
  - Measures
A Burgeoning Field

- WTG Investment
  - $25M in grants
  - 60 studies

- IES Investment
  - $10M
  - 2 national research centers

- International, cross sector scholarship
What does it mean to *use* research evidence?
Research

Implement

What works

Identify

What works

Improve

Child outcomes

Communicate

Important Findings

Generate

Important Findings

Research
Instrumental Uses
Conceptual Uses
Relational Uses
Understanding the Policy Process
Common Core State Standards

problem definition

policy development

policy adoption

(Lorraine McDonnell & Stephen Weatherford)
# Common Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLICY STAGE</th>
<th>RESEARCH USERS</th>
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| Defining the Problem (& Solution) | • Former Governors  
• Education advocates  
• NGA  
• CCSSO                  | • Low achievement of U.S. students compared to global competitors  
• Variability in state standards  
• Countries with higher achievement have national standards |
| Developing the Standards       | • NGA  
• CCSSO  
• Standards writers  
• Reviewers  
• Validation Committees | • Research on learning progressions  
• Researchers’ professional judgment  
• Teachers’ professional judgment  
• SEA staff experience |
| Adopting the Standards         | • State Boards of Education  
• NGA  
• CCSSO  
• Advocacy groups  
• Foundations               | • Little formal research  
• State-by-state comparisons of standards  
• Messaging toolkit (templates of Op-Eds, letters to the editor, FAQs) |

(adapted from Weatherford & McDonnell)
Defining the Problem & Solution

Benchmarking for Success
(NGA, CCSSO, Achieve, 2008)

“…[recommend] adopting a common core of internationally benchmarked standards in math and language arts for grades K-12 to ensure that students are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to be globally competitive.”

(McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013)
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(adapted from Weatherford & McDonnell)
Developing the Standards

Research on learning progressions

Teachers’ professional judgment

Researchers’ professional judgment

SEA Staff’s professional judgment

Math Standards
# Common Core

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(adapted from Weatherford & McDonnell)
Understanding Research Users
Why use research?

- Supporting own professional learning: 29%
- Designing policies, programs & initiatives: 27%
- Providing instructional leadership for others: 25%
- Selecting programs: 9%
- Supporting & monitoring implementation: 9%

(adapted from Farrel & Penuel)
Who is involved?

(adapted from May, Farley-Ripple, & Shewchuk)
What influences use of research evidence?
Trust & Relationships
Research Agenda on Research Use

1) Strategies to improve use of research
2) Strategies to improve production of useful research
3) How and under what conditions using research improves outcomes
New Layers

❖ Robust methods and measures
  ▪ *Studying the Use of Research Evidence: A Review of Methods*
  ▪ *Measurement Repository (forthcoming)*

❖ Critical race lens
  ▪ *Panel: Critical Race Perspectives on URE*
  ▪ *Centering the Margins: Redefining useful Research Evidence*
  ▪ *Identifying & Testing Strategies to Improve the Use of Antiracist Research Evidence*
The online application is now closed. The next deadline for letters of inquiry is May 5, 2021, 3:00pm EST.

Download the 2021 Application Guidelines for Research Grants on Improving the Use of Research Evidence (Updated November 2020)
What is Democratizing Evidence?

Democratizing evidence is about ensuring that diverse stakeholders, particularly those most closely situated to the issues, have the power and opportunity to shape the production and use of research evidence.

For too long, evidence has been the provenance of the elite, but we can shift that dynamic. Individuals and institutions can leverage resources and wield considerable influence on the conventional wisdom about how, by whom, and for whom research evidence is produced and used. Achieving equity is the key goal.

This means envisioning an education system of the future that is informed by evidence and democratically engages people from different civic and professional roles, races, ethnicities, incomes, ages, and positions in society, in decision making about high quality education for everyone.
Questions?