The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) was established in 2002 as an initiative of the Institute for Education Sciences (IES) at the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE). The goal of the WWC is to be a central and trusted source of scientific evidence for what works in education. To achieve this goal, the WWC identifies studies that provide credible and reliable evidence of the effectiveness of a given practice, program, or policy, referred to as “interventions,” and disseminates summary information and reports on the WWC website. Through over 700 publications, the WWC aims to inform researchers, educators, and policymakers as they work toward improving education for students.

IES, together with Mathematica Policy Research and other WWC partner organizations, propose a special panel for the SREE 2015 spring conference. The theme of the conference, Learning Curves: Creating and Sustaining Gains from Early Childhood through Adulthood, aligns well with the expansion of the WWC into the lifecycle of education programs, from preschool to postsecondary learning. Since many SREE conference participants may be familiar with the WWC, we propose to use this opportunity to present the ways in which the WWC is expanding resources it provides to researchers, both in terms of designing and conducting rigorous studies, as well as for practitioners looking for evidence-based interventions to use in their classrooms and schools.

In this session, we will first provide a brief introduction to the WWC focusing on two main audiences, researchers and education decision-makers. Panelists will focus on how WWC products can inform both research and practice. The examples provided in this part of the sessions will focus on the new and expanding areas of the WWC, including early childhood education; postsecondary transitions and learning; and teacher training, evaluation, and compensation. Examples provided will be based on Intervention Reports and Single Study Reviews, the main forms of WWC dissemination to date. Panelist will also describe some of the more recent forms of dissemination, such as videos and how-to guides designed to help educators use the WWC to make evidence-based choices in their schools and classrooms, as well as standards briefs, to provide quick reference guides to researchers designing strong studies.

The panelists will then describe new directions for the WWC. The WWC is at the forefront of a new White House initiative related to the Creating and Expanding Ladders of Opportunity for Boys and Young Men of Color initiative, My Brother’s Keeper Community Challenge. The goal of the Challenge is to encourage communities (cities, rural municipalities, and tribal nations) to implement a coherent cradle-to-college-and-career strategy for improving the life outcomes of all young people, to ensure that they can reach their full potential, regardless of who they are, where they come from, or the circumstances into which they are born. Three of the six goals of Challenge focus on education outcomes:

- Ensuring all children enter school cognitively, physically, socially and emotionally ready
- Ensuring all children read at grade level by 3rd grade
- Ensuring all youth graduate from high school

The White House is looking to information provided by federal clearinghouses to support communities in their efforts to identify programs that research shows to be effective, particularly for boys and young men of color. With reviews of over 10,000 studies of hundreds of interventions, the WWC is the leading federal clearinghouse to provide this type of information.
The panelists will demonstrate the WWC’s capability to show not only “what works,” but “for whom.” Panelists will also discuss future directions for leveraging the data on studies reviewed, by both the WWC and other federal clearinghouses and systematic review efforts, to develop common definitions and characteristics to allow consistent searching for information across different sources.

Organizer and Chair: Jill Constantine – Vice President, Mathematica Policy Research, and Principal Investigator, What Works Clearinghouse

Panelists

3. Jeff Valentine – Professor, College of Education and Human Development, University of Louisville, Principal Investigator, What Works Clearinghouse