

# **R2P 2018**

**Research, Policy and  
Practice Conference**

**School District of Philadelphia**  
**440 North Broad Street**  
**Philadelphia, PA 19130**

**May 21, 2018**



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF  
PHILADELPHIA



Regional Educational Laboratory  
at Mathematica Policy Research





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## Contents

Agenda.....	1
Blurbs of Superintendent and Keynote Speaker .....	3
Breakout Sessions Schedule .....	5
Poster Sessions Information .....	19
Conference Resource Tables.....	27
Conference Room Maps .....	29
Stay Connected.....	31





THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF  
PHILADELPHIA



## 2018 SDP Research, Policy and Practice Conference Agenda

May 21, 2018

8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Time	Activity
8:30–4:00 p.m.	Registration and Resource Desk - <i>Atrium</i>
9:00–9:30 a.m.	Welcome & Opening Plenary session - <i>Auditorium</i> William R. Hite, Jr., Ed.D., <i>Superintendent of the School District of Philadelphia</i>
9:30–10:30 a.m.	Keynote Speaker - <i>Auditorium</i> Brian Bumbarger, Ph.D., <i>Adjunct Associate Researcher, Prevention Research Center, Colorado State University</i> “Evidence-informed decision making to promote school success: Research informing practice; practice informing research”
10:30–10:45 a.m.	Break
10:45 a.m.– 12:05 p.m.	Morning Breakout Sessions 1. Improving Literacy from Pre-K through Grade 3 2. Reducing the Risk of Dropping Out 3. Contributing to Positive School Climate 4. Using Data and Research to Improve Ninth Grade Outcomes in the School District of Philadelphia
12:05–1:00 p.m.	Lunch – <i>Cafe 440</i>
1:00–2:00 p.m.	Networking and Poster Session – <i>Atrium</i>
2:00–3:20 p.m.	Early Afternoon Breakout Sessions 1. Improving Literacy from Pre-K through Grade 3 2. Using Research and Data to Inform Evidence-Based Decision Making 3. Reducing the Risk of Dropping Out 4. Contributing to Positive School Climate
3:20–3:30 p.m.	Break
3:30–4:50 p.m.	Late Afternoon Breakout Sessions Improving Literacy from Pre-K through Grade 3 Using Research and Data to Inform Evidence-Based Decision Making Contributing to Positive School Climate
4:50–5:00 p.m.	Closing Remarks – <i>Atrium</i>

For details on concurrent breakout sessions and presenters, please see the ***Breakout Session Schedule***.

All sessions in the Auditorium will be video recorded.

Special thanks to the Neubauer Family Foundation for providing food and beverages for conference attendees.



# Superintendent

**William R. Hite, Jr., Ed.D.**



With a focus on equity, innovation and quality, Dr. William R. Hite serves as Superintendent of The School District of Philadelphia, the largest public school system in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Since joining the School District in June 2012, Dr. Hite has worked to create a system of great schools in every neighborhood. Under his leadership, the School District has opened new innovative high schools, expanded successful school models, launched in-district turnarounds and redesigned schools in partnership with communities. His overall focus remains on strengthening all elementary and secondary school offerings.

Dr. Hite's professional experience includes serving at every level – teacher, principal, central office administrator and Superintendent. He was previously Superintendent of Prince George's County Public Schools in Maryland where his central work focused on enhanced access and rigor to ensure college- and career-readiness. Prince George's County schools, one of the 25 largest systems in the United States, received national recognition for expanding access to Advanced Placement courses during his tenure.

Dr. Hite also served as an Assistant Superintendent in Georgia's Cobb County School District. In addition, as an administrator in Henrico County, Virginia, he led Highland Springs High School to "Best Practices" honors from the state's General Assembly.

Dr. Hite has been an adjunct faculty member at the University of Richmond School of Continuous Learning and taught school leadership courses at Virginia State University, Bowie State University and the University of Maryland. A member of numerous national, state, and local boards, he has participated with national agencies and associations to reform K-12 education.

Dr. Hite holds a bachelor's degree in education from Virginia Tech, master's degree in educational leadership from the University of Virginia and a doctorate in education specializing in educational leadership from Virginia Tech. His interests include music, travel, sports and reading. He and his wife Deirdre have two daughters and a grandson.

# Keynote Speaker

**Brian K. Bumbarger, Ph.D., M.Ed.**



Brian Bumbarger works at the intersection of research, public policy, and practice to improve outcomes for communities, families and children. He is Adjunct Research Associate at the Prevention Research Centers at both Colorado State University and Penn State University; Adjunct Research Fellow at the Criminology Institute at Griffith University (Queensland, Australia), and Consultant to the Annie E. Casey Foundation. He is the Founding Director and original Principal Investigator of the Evidence-based Prevention and Intervention Support Center ([www.EPISCenter.org](http://www.EPISCenter.org)), an intermediary organization supporting the scale-up of over 300 evidence-based program replications and community prevention coalitions.

Brian serves on the Board of Directors for the National Prevention Science Coalition ([npscoalition.org](http://npscoalition.org)) and the Steering Committee for the Coalition for the Promotion of Behavioral Health. He serves on federal Expert Panels for the National Institute on Drug Abuse, U.S Department of Education, National Institute of Justice, the Centers for Disease Control, and the Administration for Children and Families, and regularly provides testimony before state legislatures, Congress, and to governments internationally. From 2012-2015 Brian was elected to the Board of Directors of the international Society for Prevention Research (SPR), and was the recipient of the Society's 2014 Translational Science Award for his research on scaling evidence-based practices. He is a founding member of both the Society for Implementation Research Collaboration (SIRC) and the Global Implementation Society.

For over two decades, he conducted research on dissemination, implementation, and sustainment of evidence-based prevention and youth development. He has been the principal investigator on several longitudinal studies of program implementation, effectiveness and sustainability, and published articles, book chapters and state and federal policy papers on prevention and implementation science



**2018 SDP Research, Policy and Practice Conference**  
**Breakout Sessions Schedule**  
**May 21, 2018**

**MORNING: 10:45-12:05PM**

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**Improving Literacy from Pre-K through Grade 3**

***Focus: Early Childhood Literacy and English Language Learners***

1. Time to Proficiency for Philadelphia's Kindergarten English Learners (Ruth Neild, Research for Action)

How long does it take Philadelphia's English learner students to reach English proficiency? This study answers that question for several cohorts of SDP students classified as English learners in kindergarten. The study, collaboratively designed by the SDP Office of Multilingual Curriculum and Programs, the SDP Office of Research and Evaluation, and the Philadelphia Education Research Consortium, found that 60 percent of kindergarteners achieved proficiency within four years. Proficiency in reading, listening, and speaking ranged from 80 to 90 percent, but proficiency in writing lagged behind, at 48 percent. Males, students with disabilities, and those who were less proficient in kindergarten achieved proficiency at lower rates. Understanding time to proficiency was an SDP priority in order to set achievable but ambitious targets for English learners.

2. Biliteracy as the Goal: Teacher and Administrator Perspectives on Dual Language Education in the School District of Philadelphia (Nelson Flores, University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education)

Dr. Nelson Flores, Assistant Professor from the University of Pennsylvania, will present findings from his longitudinal study about the implementation of dual language programs in SDP, "Biliteracy as the Goal: Teacher and Administrator Perspectives on Dual Language Education in the School District of Philadelphia." This presentation will examine the strategy that the district has undertaken to ensure the high quality of these programs and the successes and challenges it has confronted in aligning its programs with research-based best practices. It will pay particular attention to the voices of the teachers and administrators who are working to implement these programs across the six schools through a description of findings of interviews conducted with teachers and administrators at the end of the 2014-2015, 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years.

3. Implications of Time to Proficiency and Dual Language Research on District Practice (Allison Still, Maria Giraldo Gallo, and Santiago Sanchez, Office of Multilingual Curriculum and Programs, SDP)

The School District of Philadelphia is committed to supporting the academic development for English Language Learners and believes that is a shared responsibility of all educators in The School District of Philadelphia (SDP) to foster and support ELs' academic learning and provide opportunities for English language development. This session will showcase the

## 2018 SDP Research, Policy and Practice Conference

### Breakout Sessions Schedule

#### May 21, 2018

findings of two recent studies conducted in the School District of Philadelphia and how the findings of these studies have influenced the knowledge and practices of the Office of Multilingual Curriculum and Programs (OMCP). To highlight the extent of the research-practice partnerships representatives, Deputy Chief Allison Still from OMCP will discuss the implications that these studies had on the work of the District.

**Facilitator: Sydney Negus (Office of Research and Evaluation)**  
**Room: 1080**

### Reducing the Risk of Dropping Out

#### *Focus: Identifying Predictors of Youth Success*

1. Establishing an SDP On-Track Metric: What Does Success in 9th Grade Look Like? (Theodore Wills, Office of Research and Evaluation, SDP)

There is a broad research base showing that 9th grade is a crossroads for many students, and that success at this critical point has implications for on-time graduation. We will present longitudinal analyses of recent cohorts of SDP 9th graders, and the factors that most clearly predict continued success in high school, and ultimately graduation. We will also discuss how these analyses help us to understand what success in 9th grade looks like, and help us to define whether a 9th grader finishes the year on track. This is a critical first step in a fuller research program that is underway, which will span from the preparation of younger students for 9th grade, through post-graduation success.

2. Eighth-Grade Predictors of Ninth-Grade Success: Identifying At-Risk Students Before They Ever Set Foot in a High School (Austin Slaughter, Research for Action)

To keep ninth graders on track and get them off to a good start in high school, it is important for high school educators to be able to identify incoming freshmen who are likely to need additional support. Using data from the School District of Philadelphia, this study examines the best ways to use student record information from the eighth grade year to create a set of strong predictors of falling off-track in ninth grade. High schools can use these predictors to plan supports and flag students for extra attention even before they enter high school.

3. Are Philadelphia 9th Graders On Track to Graduate from High School? If Not, How Are They Off Track and Who and Where Are the Off-Track Students? (Molly Crofton, Research for Action)

Approximately one in three students in the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) Classes of 2019 and 2020 failed to earn enough credits to be considered “on track to high school graduation” at the end of their ninth-grade year. This study investigates how the on-track rate in SDP varies across students and schools. At the student-level, this study investigates what requirements students are missing and how students who are almost on track (missing

## 2018 SDP Research, Policy and Practice Conference

### Breakout Sessions Schedule

#### May 21, 2018

1 of 5 requirements) differ from those who are moderately or far off track. With school on-track rates ranging from 0 to 100%, the study then looks at how the schools with low, medium, and high on-track rates differ from each other and how students tend to be off track in these schools.

4. Using Data and Research to Improve Ninth Grade Outcomes in the School District of Philadelphia (Fateama Fulmore, Office of High School Supports, SDP)

In alignment with the School District of Philadelphia's Action Plan 3.0, all high schools are making a concerted effort to support all students as they transition to high school. This presentation will describe recent District efforts to improve supports for students, including a new Student Information System, implementation of 9th Grade Academies in 20 high schools, and using data from a new interactive performance management dashboard for school and district leaders to examine trends and identify individual supports for students.

**Facilitator: Amber Goldberg (Office of Research and Evaluation)**  
**Room: Auditorium**

### Contributing to Positive School Climate

#### *Focus: School Involvement in Nutrition and Physical Activity*

1. Engaging Families Through Food: Produce Stands at Schools (Erin Cassar, Office of Research and Evaluation, SDP)

With 37% of children living in poverty, food insecurity is a major obstacle to learning in the School District of Philadelphia. Research shows that children who are hungry have higher rates of absences, tardiness, developmental delays, and negative social skills – all key elements of school climate. Partnering with Share, a local anti-hunger organization, the Eat.Right.Now (ERN) nutrition education program has begun to tackle this challenge at 25 schools by offering subsidized produce at stands during drop-off and pick-up times, along with cooking lessons for parents and caregivers. During this session, ORE will present the results of this year's observations and surveys, connecting to both prior and future evaluations. We especially emphasize the ways in which produce stands and caregiver cooking lessons can engage families in creating a culture of health at home and at school.

2. The School Health Index: A Needs Assessment to Inform Whole-Child Initiatives (Soula Panagodimos, Office of Research and Evaluation, School District of Philadelphia)

During this session, the District's Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) will review the process of conducting a district-wide needs assessment to inform decisions on how to improve student health, academic achievement, and school climate. We will discuss the

**2018 SDP Research, Policy and Practice Conference**  
**Breakout Sessions Schedule**  
**May 21, 2018**

challenges, lessons learned, and best practices for collecting data, coordinating with schools, and developing the buy-in necessary for school staff to complete a self-reported assessment. Finally, we will review trends and themes identified from results of the assessment as well as from informal interviews conducted with school leadership and staff. The goal is for schools and partners, including Eat.Right.Now (ERN) to use this data to create healthy school environments and improve both health and academic outcomes.

3. Relations Between Physical Activity and Positive School Climate (Annaka Scheeres, Philadelphia Department of Public Health)

The Philadelphia Department of Public Health - Division of Chronic Disease Prevention (Get Healthy Philly) in collaboration with the School District of Philadelphia administered an assessment of practices, barriers, and facilitators of physical activity in District elementary schools. Data were collected from 61 randomly selected schools through interviews with principals, physical education teachers, and other relevant staff and were analyzed using multiple regression. Consistent with other studies, the results of the assessment indicate that physical activity may contribute to positive school climate and student achievement. Key implications from the study were: 1) attendance investments go farther when physical education is valued, 2) physical activity does not come at the expense of academics, and 3) experienced educators understand the benefit of physical activity for students and schools.

**Facilitator: Erin Cassar (Office of Research and Evaluation)**  
**Room: 1182**

**2018 SDP Research, Policy and Practice Conference**  
**Breakout Sessions Schedule**  
**May 21, 2018**

**EARLY AFTERNOON: 2:00-3:20PM**

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**Improving Literacy from Pre-K through Grade 3**

***Focus: Kindergarten Registration and Attendance***

1. The Issue of Kindergarten Registration in the School District of Philadelphia (Katherine Mosher, Office of Research and Evaluation, and Kate Bradstreet, Office of Early Childhood Education, SDP)

The School District of Philadelphia has identified late Kindergarten registration as a critical District-wide issue. Fewer than 50% of the students who ultimately attend Kindergarten register on time. Furthermore, 23% of the 2017-18 Kindergarten class was still unregistered a week into the school year, and roughly 15% had not yet registered by the end of the second week of school. Data from the 2016-17 school year reveals a statistically significant difference between the Average Daily Attendance of students who registered late for Kindergarten and those who registered on time. To set the context of this session, we will begin by discussing the findings of internal analyses conducted by the School District of Philadelphia's (SDP) Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) that connects late Kindergarten registration with increased Kindergarten absenteeism and how this connects to lower Kindergarten reading outcomes.

2. Causes of Late Kindergarten Registration (Ryan Fink, Consortium for Policy Research in Education, and Katherine Mosher, Office of Research and Evaluation, SDP)

This presentation will discuss a collaborative research effort by ORE and the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) that examines the causes of late Kindergarten Registration. In order to better understand the barriers to on-time Kindergarten registration, SDP partnered with CPRE to develop an evaluation plan to gather evidence from multiple stakeholders on the barriers of on-time registration. The primary goal of the evaluation was to use this evidence to inform short- and long-term District policy and procedure changes that would increase on-time registration rates. We will also outline the methods ORE used to evaluate the Kindergarten registration process at 150 District schools and share data from the District-wide Pre-K survey, interviews and focus groups with 185 parents and 16 school staff members, and survey results from 105 school secretaries. Several common themes emerged from the data, including the difficulty of obtaining the required documentation, a lack of clear information about catchment zones and the Kindergarten registration process overall, concerns over custody challenges and residency falsification, and a lack of support for staff who manage the registration process. Furthermore, data revealed that the messaging around on time registration is inconsistent and poorly understood.

3. Using Evaluation Outcomes to Drive Improvements in Kindergarten Registration (Ami Patel Hopkins, Office of Early Childhood Education, SDP)

## 2018 SDP Research, Policy and Practice Conference

### Breakout Sessions Schedule

#### May 21, 2018

To connect the research to practice and policy, representatives from SDP's Office of Early Childhood Education (ECE) will share how they are using the findings of this study to drive process and policy changes at the District. For example, in response to these findings, SDP is collaborating with the City of Philadelphia to use immunization records to identify and contact families with eligible Kindergarten students about Kindergarten registration. SDP is also providing additional clarification to School Secretaries about the required documentation and how to approach custody or residency issues. Finally, SDP has identified Kindergarten Transition Leads at each elementary school to coordinate registration outreach efforts in conjunction with the District.

4. Kindergarten Attendance: A Partnership Between the School District of Philadelphia and the Read by 4th Campaign (Abby Thaker, Read by 4th, and Giselle Saleet, Office of Research and Evaluation, SDP)

This presentation will introduce a research-to-practice partnership between SDP and the Read by 4th Campaign that places Community Attendance Ambassadors in eight North Philadelphia elementary schools to address chronic absenteeism and lateness in Kindergarten. Read by 4th will discuss the implementation and refinement of the evidence-based intervention and the decision to collaborate with SDP to study the possible relationship between the intervention and attendance. ORE will discuss early findings from the study of the intervention, particularly the ongoing barriers to Kindergarten attendance. Finally, Read by 4th and a representative from the District will discuss the impact of the findings of this research on practice.

**Facilitator: Kristyn Stewart (Office of Research and Evaluation)**  
**Room: Auditorium**

### Using Research and Data to Inform Evidence-Based Decision Making

#### *Focus: Systems and Processes that Can Influence Decisions*

1. A More Comprehensive Approach to Research and Evaluation: How the Office of Research and Evaluation Is Incorporating District-Wide Survey Data Into Its Summative and Formative Work (Adrienne Reitano, Office of Research and Evaluation, SDP)

This session will review the District-wide survey program in the School District of Philadelphia and discuss how the Office of Research and Evaluation uses survey data. The development, administration, and the various ways that the survey data is analyzed and operationalized will be discussed. The session will also touch on the challenges and benefits of incorporating survey data into our research and evaluation work, both generally, and by using specific examples. The presenter will cover past and current practices, as well as plans for how to improve and expand the integration of the surveys into SDP's culture of continuous improvement.



**2018 SDP Research, Policy and Practice Conference**  
**Breakout Sessions Schedule**  
**May 21, 2018**

2. Worth the Investment? The Impact of Localized Accountability Systems on Student Achievement (Haisheng Yang, University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education)

For this paper, I use the School District of Philadelphia's School Progress Report (SPR) to investigate whether district-specific school rating systems influence school-level outcomes above and beyond pre-existing report cards developed by state agencies. The SPR assigns one of four categories (Intervene, Watch, Reinforce, or Model) to each Philadelphia school. Using a regression discontinuity approach, I leverage variation in the underlying score used to assign these four cut-off categories to estimate the SPR's effect on schools. This paper pays special attention to the effect of being assigned to the Intervene category because the School District of Philadelphia imposes incentives and consequences to schools in Intervene, but no other categories.

3. Learn, Innovate, Improve (LI<sup>2</sup>): A New Approach to Using Evidence for Continuous Program Improvement (Annalisa Mastri, Mathematica Policy Research)

Learn, Innovate, Improve (LI<sup>2</sup>) is a systematic approach to managing program change and continuous quality improvement. It involves assessing the program environment and motivation for change (Learn); collaboratively designing evidence-informed solutions (Innovate); and conducting a series of pilot tests to refine implementation (Improve). This session will provide an overview of LI<sup>2</sup> and discuss the three phases in detail, emphasizing the Improve phase--in which program changes are pilot tested on a small scale; data and feedback are collected and analyzed; and the results of the analysis are used to adjust and refine implementation before scaling up. The session will incorporate examples of how LI<sup>2</sup> has been used in various human services contexts.

4. Challenges and Approaches in Implementing ESSA Mandates Protecting Foster Youth (Catherine Darrow, Abt Associates)

In 2016, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) required school districts to implement specific steps to meet the unique needs of foster care youth. However, reports suggest that school districts and state agencies continue to struggle in meeting the needs of this special population. Beyond fulfilling ESSA-related mandates, school districts are compelled to improve the educational experiences of such vulnerable members of their communities. This presentation will provide attendees with a brief overview of the K-12 foster care population with particular emphasis on those children enrolled in the School District of Philadelphia (SDP). Presenters will layout ESSA requirements targeting foster youth and challenges that schools and districts have faced in complying with mandates. Presenters will conclude by suggesting considerations and solutions in meeting ESSA requirements.

**2018 SDP Research, Policy and Practice Conference**  
**Breakout Sessions Schedule**  
**May 21, 2018**

**Facilitator: Adrienne Reitano (Office of Research and Evaluation)**  
**Room: 1182**

**Reducing the Risk of Dropping Out**

***Focus: Evidence-Based Strategies, Programs, and Resources to Prevent Dropout***

1. Evidence-Based Strategies for Preventing Dropout in Secondary School (Diana McCallum, REL Mid-Atlantic at Mathematica Policy Research)

Students who do not complete high school may face an array of economic and social challenges throughout their lifetimes. The Evidence-Based Practices for Preventing Dropout in Secondary School Practice Guide aims to minimize those challenges by providing strategies supported by both evidence and expert opinion. This presentation will provide an overview of the guide, which is the latest Practice Guide released by the What Works Clearinghouse. It provides four evidence-based recommendations to reduce the risk of dropping out of high school. This presentation will detail the recommendations that are supported by rigorous evidence, suggested steps for carrying out each recommendation, and examples of the ways recommendations can be implemented by school and district administrators.

2. A Systematic Review of Programs to Improve Expectant and Parenting Teens' Academic Outcomes (Jessica Harding, Mathematica Policy Research)

Becoming a teen parent can interrupt educational progress because teens often leave school to care for their children. This presentation will report findings from a systematic review of programs that promote teen parents' education. We conducted an extensive search for rigorous evidence about the effectiveness of programs in improving teens' academics. We identified 13 programs that had rigorous evidence about academics. Eight of these programs improved teens' outcomes. Programs were more likely to improve teens' educational progress (such as attendance or credit accumulation) than their educational attainment (such as receipt of a high school diploma or GED completion). We will discuss the characteristics and features of effective programs to provide insight into strategies for supporting expectant and parenting teens and preventing dropout.

3. Evidence of Impact: School-Based Health Resource Centers and Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health in Philadelphia (Hilary O'Connell and Meghan Rich, AccessMatters)

Controversy around adolescent sexuality has long inhibited the implementation of sexual and reproductive health services in school-based health centers. The AccessMatters Health Resource Center (HRC) Program is a notable exception, providing health education, counseling, preventive services, and direct linkages to Title X family planning clinics to students at School District of Philadelphia high schools in low-income neighborhoods that report high rates of unwanted pregnancy and STDs among youth. In this presentation, we



**2018 SDP Research, Policy and Practice Conference**  
**Breakout Sessions Schedule**  
**May 21, 2018**

review preliminary results of a long-term project to establish evidence of HRC impact on youth outcomes, and suggest that teens in Philadelphia with access to HRCs are better equipped than teens without to reduce their risk of pregnancy and STDs.

**Facilitator: Diana McCallum (REL Mid-Atlantic at Mathematica Policy Research)**

**Room: 1069**

**Contributing to Positive School Climate**

***Focus: Influencing Student Behavior – An In-Depth Discussion of the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support Framework***

1. Overview of Climate Work in the School District of Philadelphia (Jody Greenblatt, Office of School Climate and Safety, SDP)

Jody Greenblatt will be discussing the School District of Philadelphia's efforts to improve school climate, including a discussion of the evidenced-based initiatives that are being implemented in the District. Ms. Greenblatt will discuss successes and challenges with implementation and where SDP is moving with its work to improve school climate.

2. PBIS and Outcomes in the School District of Philadelphia (Melissa Karakus, Office of Research and Evaluation, SDP)

The goal of School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (SWPBIS) is a school-wide shared understanding of appropriate behaviors. It is anticipated that with three to five years of solid implementation, schools may experience an increase in attendance, a decrease in suspensions, and potentially an increase in achievement. This presentation will share an update of 2016-17 outcomes for 40 District schools implementing SWPBIS. Specifically, three fidelity of implementation measures will be described and school outcomes on each measure will be shared. Findings focus on changes in the outcomes of attendance and suspensions from baseline. Additional findings on achievement in schools implementing SWPBIS compared to schools who are not implementing SWPBIS will be presented.

3. Implementation Strategies of PBIS with Mental Health Supports in Urban Schools (Billie Schwartz, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia)

Billie Schwartz, a pediatric psychologist at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia will be describing and discussing preliminary outcomes from an implementation study which introduces mental health supports into the Tier 2 components of a clinical trial of PBIS within urban schools. The mental health supports (Coping Power Program & FRIENDS for LIFE) are group cognitive behavioral interventions for externalizing and internalizing disorders seen in school-aged children. Child mental health, school, and implementation

**2018 SDP Research, Policy and Practice Conference**  
**Breakout Sessions Schedule**  
**May 21, 2018**

outcome data from the first three years of a federally-funded study will be discussed. Barriers and challenges to implementation will also be described.

4. Discipline in Context: Suspension and PBIS in the School District of Philadelphia (Abigail Gray, Consortium for Policy Research in Education)

This presentation will share the results of a federally funded exploratory study of disciplinary practices and PBIS in SDP. The study was conducted by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania in collaboration with SDP. Findings focus on K-5 and K-8 schools' successes and challenges in implementing alternatives to suspension. Three school profiles, which were developed based on schools' disciplinary approaches, will be described, along with the profiles' relationship to student achievement and suspension rates. Recommendations for enhancing PBIS implementation in SDP schools will be discussed.

**Facilitator: Melissa Karakus (Office of Research and Evaluation)**

**Room: 1080**

**2018 SDP Research, Policy and Practice Conference**  
**Breakout Sessions Schedule**  
**May 21, 2018**

**LATE AFTERNOON: 3:30-4:50PM**

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**Improving Literacy from Pre-K through Grade 3**

***Focus: Providing Support to Teachers and Parents***

1. Coaching Logs as a Tool for Change – Informing, Grounding, and Reflection on an Early Literacy Initiative (Lauren Goldenberg, NYC Department of Education)

This session will describe the development and use of a daily digital coaching log in a New York City Department of Education early literacy initiative. NYCDOE’s internal research group and its Early Literacy team collaboratively developed, field-tested, and established the content validity of the log. K-2 Reading Coaches complete the log each day they work on-site in schools, to describe how they spend their time. We will share artifacts, examples, and data that illustrate how researchers, program leadership, and coaches have worked together to produce, implement and use data generated from this “practical measure” (Bryk, Gomez, Grunow, & LeMahieu, 2015; Yeager, Bryk, Muhich, Hausman, & Morales, 2013) for improving implementation fidelity.

2. Exploring the Use of Texting to Support Family-School Engagement in Early Childhood Settings: Parent and Teacher Perspectives (Emily Snell, Temple University)

New technologies offer exciting opportunities for improving home-school communication, family engagement, and children’s learning in early childhood. We present results of a study focused on understanding how texting and texting-based applications (e.g., Remind or ClassDojo) might enhance family-school engagement in early childhood settings. Using focus groups and surveys of teachers (n=20) and family members (n=30) in the SDP early childhood program, we examined communication (including texting) between school and home, openness to the idea of sending or receiving communication via text, and beliefs about how texting can support various aspects of family-school engagement. Results suggest that teachers and family members are largely open to using texting to communicate and that texting can support multiple elements of family-school engagement, including learning activities at home.

3. Successful Trajectories for Literacy Among Native and Immigrant Toddlers (Katherine Land, Katharine Hemady, and Patricia Manz, Public Health Management Corporation)

As Philadelphia expands early childhood programming for a diverse population of children, discerning culturally responsive home visiting services for low-income toddlers will strengthen the District’s capacity to prepare children for successful kindergarten transition. This presentation will describe the adaptation of the Parent-Child Home Program (PCHP) to low-income toddlers whose parents are native-born and immigrant. This adaption is empirically-driven, involving a longitudinal examination of PCHP fidelity, toddlers’ communication and language development, parents’ competencies in promoting early

**2018 SDP Research, Policy and Practice Conference**  
**Breakout Sessions Schedule**  
**May 21, 2018**

learning, and stakeholders' perceptions of acceptability. The initiation of the program in two Philadelphia communities and preliminary analyses of demographics and outcomes will be detailed.

**Facilitator: Katherine Mosher (Office of Research and Evaluation)**

**Room: 1069**

**Using Research and Data to Inform Evidence-Based Decision Making**

***Focus: Using Data at the High School Level***

1. A Unified, Research-Based Framework for Career Development (Erica Feldman, Philadelphia Youth Network, Inc.)

Join us to learn about the Philadelphia Youth Network's recently released Career Development Framework (CDF). Research teaches us that young people need a unified approach to skill development, career readiness, career retention and career advancement to become successful adults. In this breakout session, will delve into what makes our CDF unique, how and why we created it, where it has already been integrated into programming & policy and future roll-out plans. We are excited to share the CDF with educators and practitioners.

2. Using Local Data to Improve School Life, Education, and Family Engagement for English Learners (Jill Swavely, Megeara Mabry, Lia Sandilos, and Mark Emerick, Temple University)

Our session illustrates how a joint project between Temple University and the School District of Philadelphia is collaborating with administrators and teachers to use data to inform decision-making and improve the high school experiences of English learners. The English Learners (ELs) School L.I.F.E. Program seeks improve the experiences of ELs in following ways: by providing resources and support to school leaders as they make schoolwide changes, by improving content teachers' instruction through graduate-level coursework at Temple University, and by hosting family English classes that specifically address helping parents engage with their children's schools. This project is currently being implemented at seven SDP high schools. Attendees will be presented with research-based improvement measures that could be implemented efficiently at their own schools.

3. Putting Grade Data to Work: From Research to Practice Part 1 (Alex Seeskin, University of Chicago)

Over the past year, the School District of Philadelphia has partnered with the University of Chicago's To&Through Project to work on improving Freshman On-Track rates and high school graduation rates. In Part 1, Alex Seeskin, the Director of the To&Through Project,

## 2018 SDP Research, Policy and Practice Conference

### Breakout Sessions Schedule

#### May 21, 2018

will present research from the UChicago Consortium on the importance of freshman on-track, grades, and attendance.

4. Putting Grade Data to Work: From Research to Practice Part 2 (Lucas Westmaas, District Performance Office, and Nicole Lee, School District of Philadelphia)

In Part 2, representatives of SDP will describe ways in which this research is informing action. Lucas Westmaas, Senior Associate from the District Performance Office, will demonstrate two research-based data tools his office has developed to help educators analyze student grades. Finally, Nicole Lee, Principal at Franklin Learning Center, will share how she has used this data to improve outcomes at her school.

**Facilitator: Theodore Wills (Office of Research and Evaluation)**

**Room: Auditorium**

### Contributing to Positive School Climate

#### *Focus: Creating Frameworks to Improve School Climate*

1. Queering High School: Coping, Survival, and Resistance of Trans Youth (Amy Hillier, Kel Kroehle, Hazel Edwards, and Giana Graves, University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice and The Attic)

In June 2016, the Philadelphia's School Reform Commission voted unanimously in favor of Policy 252 to support the rights of transgender and gender non-conforming students and improve what trans/GNC students experienced as a hostile school climate. In order to better understand the experience of trans/GNC students in Philadelphia public high schools, we conducted in-depth interviews with 21 current or recent students between June 2016 and August 2017 who identified as trans/GNC. This study used critical participatory action research (CPAR) to engage trans-identified youth as the lead interviewers and full participants in all phases of the research study. Results centered around three themes: (1) Youth experience gender identity as fluid and dynamic; (2) School bureaucracies are inherently in conflict with that experience by reinforcing multiple binaries; (3) Trans/GNC students have multiple strategies for negotiating daily conflicts in school that blend coping, surviving, and resisting.

2. The Friend-to-Friend Relational Aggression Intervention: Moving from Researcher-Led to School Staff Implementation (Brooke Paskewich, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia)

Relational aggression (e.g., rumor spreading, social exclusion) is related to peer relationship problems, social processing deficits, and internalizing and externalizing symptoms, increases in frequency, and leads to physical violence among girls in urban communities. However, few empirically-supported programs address the needs of this population and most rely on external resources, limiting school capacity to independently, effectively and

**2018 SDP Research, Policy and Practice Conference**  
**Breakout Sessions Schedule**  
**May 21, 2018**

sustainably conduct relational aggression prevention programming. In response, we developed the Friend to Friend with Coaching Program, an effective group intervention for 3rd-5th grade urban relationally aggressive girls that has been translated from researcher-led to staff-led with coaching from the research team. We will present the coaching model, SDP survey results about program benefit, utility and feasibility, and considerations for an NIH clinical trial across 40 SDP schools.

3. Transitioning the PRAISE Aggression Prevention Program from Researcher Led to School Led: Preliminary Evaluation and Implications for Scaling (Steve Leff, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia)

Aggression and bullying are of great concern for minority youth. Yet, many school-based prevention programs are not designed to meet the needs of this at-risk population and do not have procedures in place for eventual scale-up and dissemination. Preventing Relational Aggression in Schools Everyday (PRAISE) is an effective 20 session classroom-based program for 3rd-5th grade students that teaches problem-solving, sympathy, perspective-taking, and positive bystander strategies (Leff et al., 2010). During this presentation, we will examine the process, feasibility, and impact of PRAISE as conducted by school staff with 179 3rd grade students. This study provides preliminary evidence that coaching and training of school staff may build school capacity to conduct, disseminate, and sustain social-emotional programming for at-risk youth.

**Facilitator: Shannon Hitchcock (Office of Research and Evaluation)**

**Room: 1080**

Note: All sessions in the auditorium may be recorded and posted online. Please notify a REL staff member if you have objections or concerns. Thank you.



## 2018 SDP Research, Policy and Practice Conference

### Poster Session

1:00-2:00 p.m – *Atrium*

May 21, 2018

#### *Focus: College and Career Readiness*

1. Tracking Education and Employment Outcomes For 2015-2016 Graduates of CTE Programs (Michael Frisone, Amber Goldberg, and Ted Wills, SDP)

Each year, District's Office of Career and Technical Education (CTE) surveys recent graduates of the District's 30+ CTE programs. Beginning in 2016, the CTE Office partnered with the Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) to administer the survey electronically. In 2017, efforts to improve response rates were furthered with the implementation of text message survey invites and reminders. In order to determine how text invites compared to email invites, a randomized experiment was conducted during the first day of the surveys distribution. This study aims to determine if CTE graduates are more likely to respond to the follow up survey if invitations are sent through text, email, or when both distribution methods are implemented.

2. Using Data to Inform Practice: Lessons Learned from the Philadelphia GEAR UP Evaluation (Julia Alemany and Claire Aulicino, Metis Associates)

The Philadelphia GEAR UP College Readiness Collaborative Communities (CRCC) initiative seeks to improve the educational outcomes of Philadelphia's low-income students and prepare them for postsecondary education. This seven-year federally-funded grant offers a robust menu of services in 12 neighborhood high schools, including: PD and coaching for educators; academic, SEL and college and career readiness supports for students; and family events. Each year, Metis Associates conducts a mixed-method evaluation designed to assess the implementation and outcomes of the initiative, including: student, parent, and educator surveys; school visits; and analyses of demographic, program participation, attendance, academic achievement, and behavioral data. The CRCC project uses formative findings on an ongoing basis to drive programming and measure its progress in meeting both process and outcome objectives.

3. 2016 - 2017 Senior Exit Survey and Summer Melt Analysis (Shannon Hitchcock and Ji Eun Park, SDP)

The School District of Philadelphia's Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) conducts a senior exit survey each Spring to capture students' intentions after high school. During the following Fall, ORE conducts a follow-up analysis using National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data on actual post-secondary enrollment. College-intending students who do not enroll in a post-secondary institution the Fall after high school graduation have experienced what is known as "summer melt." Of the 2016-2017 Seniors who indicated post-secondary intent, 69.5% enrolled, so the summer melt rate for this group was 30.5%. In addition, males, Latino, Limited English Proficient (LEP), special education (IEP), and economically disadvantaged students were less likely to have post-secondary intentions, and had higher summer melt rates than their peers.

**2018 SDP Research, Policy and Practice Conference****Poster Session****1:00-2:00 p.m – Atrium****May 21, 2018**

4. The Critical Role of Teachers in College Placement and Persistence (Erika Kitzmiller and Ted Domers, Teachers College, Columbia University)

This presentation examines our findings from a year-long ethnographic study of college placement and persistence at Carver E & S High School. In our work, we have found that teachers play a critical role in advising students on college placement and supporting them to be persistent in four-year institutions. However, the time that teachers have to do this work is quite limited in our schools. Using data from classroom observations, teachers interviews, and student surveys, this work seeks to understand how we might be able to leverage the relationships that teachers have with their students and give them the time that they need to support their future aims. This project is part of a larger three-year NSF funded initiative underway at Carver E & S that is led by Dr. Kitzmiller. This project seeks to validate that authentic learning is directly tied to college placement and success in engineering careers by studying a school as it goes through this transition. In particular, we will examine teacher beliefs, school reform, and student perspectives in a school that is engaged in moving its instructional practices and pedagogical approaches from traditional, direct instruction to more project-based, authentic learning.

***Focus: Literacy***

5. An Evaluation of Children's Literacy Initiative's Blueprint for Early Literacy in Philadelphia Pre-K Centers (Alyn McCarty, Kendra Strouf, Rachel Comly, and Matthew Rigby, Research for Action)

Among public school students in Philadelphia, only 15% of fourth graders performed at or above the proficient level on the 2015 NAEP reading assessment. There is a clear, urgent need to help children "Read by 4th" in Philadelphia, which we know to be the primary indicator of long-term academic success. This poster will present year 2 results from a three-year mixed-methods evaluation of an evidence-based, developmentally-appropriate teacher professional development and curricular program called Blueprint for Early Literacy. The study includes 11 high-quality, majority low-income pre-k centers in Philadelphia that are receiving Blueprint training, coaching, and curriculum, with a matched comparison group of 11 pre-k centers in Philadelphia. Centers receiving Blueprint provide qualitative and quantitative data about implementation and impact of Blueprint on teachers and students, and centers serving as a comparison provide data on activities and outcomes that represent business-as-usual. Overall, 22 center directors, over 80 teachers, and approximately 1,100 students are participating in the study.

6. AARP Foundation Experience Corps Program Evaluation in the School District of Philadelphia (2016-2017) (Kristyn Stewart and Giselle Saleet, SDP)



## 2018 SDP Research, Policy and Practice Conference

### Poster Session

1:00-2:00 p.m – *Atrium*

May 21, 2018

The AARP Foundation Experience Corps (AARP EC) tutoring program aims to support K-3 students who are reading below grade level to improve their reading abilities by the end of third grade. AARP EC tutors work one-on-one with students, lead small groups of students, or assist the teacher with the full class. This poster presents the findings of a program evaluation conducted by SDP's Office of Research and Evaluation during the 2016 -2017 school year. The evaluation focused on the fidelity of program implementation; satisfaction of teachers, students, and tutors with program experience; and the impact on student performance and classroom environment.

7. Results from the Annual Literacy Institute: Changes in Teacher Knowledge of Early Literacy Best Practices (Kristyn Stewart, Katie Mosher, and Giselle Saleet, SDP)

Summer Literacy Institute, one of the key components of the School District of Philadelphia's effort to improve early literacy, is an annual week-long professional development opportunity for K-3 teachers. Nearly 2,000 educators from 151 schools have attended Institute between 2015 and 2017. This poster presents outcomes from the District's evaluation of three Summer Institutes including changes in teacher knowledge about best practices in early literacy.

8. Supporting the Literacy Block: Results from and Satisfaction with the Coaching Protocol for Early Literacy (CPEL) (Kristyn Stewart and Katie Mosher, SDP)

The Coaching Protocol for Early Literacy (CPEL) is an observation tool used to assess teachers' progress in 10 domains related to the 120-minute literacy block (Literacy Environment, Classroom Culture, Read Aloud, Shared Reading, Independent Work Time, Guided Reading, Independent Reading/Reading Workshop, and Writing Workshop). This poster presents district-level CPEL results from five administrations of the CEPL during the 2016-17 school year as well as findings from a May 2017 survey of literacy coaches about their experiences using the CPEL for coaching.

### ***Focus: Math***

9. Strengthening and Sustaining Instructional Leadership in Mathematics in a Network of Elementary Schools (Kathleen Krier, University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education)

This design-based research project is focused on improving mathematics education in a network of elementary schools through a research-practice partnership between Penn-GSE and The School District of Philadelphia. The project aims to build coherence across different organizational levels (district, network, school and classroom) around the improvement of instructional practices in K-8 mathematics by developing critical links to help translate the District instructional vision into classroom practice. This includes developing a shared understanding of high quality math instruction, engaging in strategic planning for math

**2018 SDP Research, Policy and Practice Conference****Poster Session****1:00-2:00 p.m – Atrium****May 21, 2018**

instructional leadership, and providing mentorship for math lead teachers to provide effective instructional coaching. The project is studying how to best support principals and math lead teachers as they develop their instructional leadership practices.

10. Experimental Impacts of the Ongoing Assessment Project on Teachers and Students (Robert Nathenson and Jonathan Supovitz, CPRE, University of Pennsylvania)

We conducted a two-year (2014-2016) randomized control trial on the impacts of the Ongoing Assessment Project (OGAP) on teachers and students in grades 3-5 in 61 public and charter schools in the School District of Philadelphia and an adjacent district. OGAP is a mathematics formative assessment program that builds teachers capacity to regularly assess students' developing understanding of mathematical concepts, and to use this information to provide informed instructional responses. We find increased teacher knowledge for teachers who participated in OGAP relative to teachers in the comparison group. We found significant impacts of OGAP on student performance in both accuracy and sophistication in both years of the study. We also found impacts of OGAP on PSSA performance in years one and cumulatively across both years.

***Focus: Student Behavior***

11. Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports in the School District of Philadelphia, 2016-17 (Melissa Karakus, SDP)

This poster presents an update of 2016-17 outcomes for 40 District schools implementing School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (SWPBIS). Outcomes on three fidelity of implementation measures are presented. Additionally reported are findings that focus on changes in attendance and suspensions from baseline, as well as achievement. Findings reveal that more than half of schools met fidelity in 2016-17, 25% experienced increases in attendance, and more than half experienced an increase in the percent of students receiving zero suspensions. Schools implementing SWPBIS experienced greater gains on the English PSSA than non-SWPBIS schools.

12. 2016-2018 Evaluation of the Playworks TeamUp Model in Philadelphia (Sydney Negus, Melissa Karakus, and Soula Panagodimos, SDP)

Playworks is a national nonprofit recess program that seeks to improve students' emotional health, social behavior, and school climate through organized and enhanced play. This poster will share the preliminary findings of the two-year evaluation of the Playworks TeamUp model currently being implemented in eight District schools. The TeamUp model places coaches at schools for one week every month with the goal of training school-based staff to run a Playworks recess model at their school. Emerging themes from the evaluation indicate that school staff are generally satisfied with Playworks and with the training that

**2018 SDP Research, Policy and Practice Conference****Poster Session****1:00-2:00 p.m – Atrium****May 21, 2018**

they receive, but that lack of consistency is an obstacle to implementation with fidelity of the TeamUp model. Other emerging themes are also discussed.

***Focus: Student Support***

13. Demographic, Mental Health, and Academic Characteristics of Students enrolled in Group-Based Mental Health Interventions within Philadelphia Schools (Madeline Plansky and Olivia Rich, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia)

Project ACCESS (Advancing Collaboration for Student's Emotional and School Success) is a five-year federally funded project studying the implementation of evidence-based group interventions for school-aged children in public schools in Philadelphia. This poster describes the characteristics of 181 children in six schools who participated in two evidence-based group mental health interventions; Coping Power Program (Lochman & Wells, 2004) for children with behavioral difficulties and FRIENDS for Life (Barrett, 2005) for children with anxiety problems. This poster highlights participants' demographics, mental health diagnoses, and academic performance. We review differences in gender and race between groups and the high degree of co-occurring mental health diagnoses. Then, we discuss implications for schools, including improving our understanding of who might benefit from mental health intervention in educational settings.

14. The Classroom Engagement Scale: Validation of an Assessment for District-Wide Use in Kindergarten (Cassandra Henderson, University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education)

Success in school depends not only on academic skills but also on social-emotional competencies, such as classroom engagement. Classroom engagement represents a child's ability to connect with academic tasks and to connect with people in the classroom (i.e., peers and teachers). In partnership with the School District of Philadelphia's Office of Early Childhood Education, this study addressed the psychometric properties of a 14-item scale used to measure the classroom engagement of all kindergarteners in the district. Using multi-level factor analysis, the scale was found to be reliable and valid, capturing two dimensions of classroom engagement consistent with the research literature. These dimensions operated consistently across demographic subgroups and time. Scores on the two dimensions were differentially predictive of important educational indicators in third grade.

**2018 SDP Research, Policy and Practice Conference****Poster Session****1:00-2:00 p.m – Atrium****May 21, 2018*****Focus: Supportive Environments***

15. Expanding Breakfast Participation in the School District of Philadelphia (Catherine Tkatch, Ebru Erdem-Akcay, Erin Cassar, and Stacy Smith, SDP)

Studies show that children learn better in school when they eat a healthy breakfast. This year, two important initiatives have aimed to increase school breakfast participation across the School District of Philadelphia. The Division of Food Services targeted 30 schools to support the adoption of “alternative” breakfast service models, such as Grab & Go carts and Breakfast in the Classroom. Concurrently, 41 District schools participated in the Philadelphia School Breakfast Challenge, through which the Coalition Against Hunger offered prizes to schools with the largest increases in breakfast participation over last year. This poster presents ORE’s analysis of reported Food Services data to explore associations between breakfast participation rates, breakfast models, and the two initiatives.

16. Using Classroom Renovations and Center-Based Learning to Improve Teacher-Student Interactions in Grades PK-2 (Kelly Linker and Kristyn Stewart, SDP)

The School District of Philadelphia (SDP) renovated 31 PK-2 classrooms in summer 2017 at three elementary schools and one PK center. In addition to structural updates, classrooms received new furniture and manipulatives to facilitate center-based learning and teachers received 14 hours of professional development. The Office of Research and Evaluation at SDP conducted classroom visits in treatment and comparison schools using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS, a nationally validated tool developed at the University of Virginia) at three time points: spring 2017, fall/winter 2017-18, and spring 2018. After the second round of classroom visits, treatment teachers showed statistically significant growth in two out of three CLASS domains. SDP is using these initial results to expand renovations to additional early elementary classrooms in the District.

17. 2016-2017 School Support Census (Sydney Negus, Kelsey Weir, and Adrienne Reitano, SDP)

The annual School Support Census collects information about what external programs are active in each School District of Philadelphia school, as reported by the school principals. This poster presents an overview of the findings from the 2016-2017 Census. During last year’s Census, it was found that there is variability in support and programming across schools. Schools in the Turnaround Network received the least external support, while schools in the Autonomy Network receive the most support and programming. The Turnaround Network also reported the highest number of critical needs. Findings from the 2016-2017 Census should be considered as future decisions are made about where to direct external support providers in the District.

**2018 SDP Research, Policy and Practice Conference****Poster Session****1:00-2:00 p.m – Atrium****May 21, 2018*****Focus: Teacher Support***

18. Successes and Challenges of a Pilot Residency Program: Interim Findings (Adrienne Reitano and Sydney Negus, SDP)

In 2017-2018, the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) partnered with Relay Graduate School of Education (Relay) to develop and implement a graduate-level teacher preparation program that targets current SDP employees and career changers, with the goal of preparing them to be successful teachers in hard-to- fill schools and hard-to- fill content areas. In year 1 of the partnership (2017-2018), Relay and SDP recruited and are training 20 Relay resident teachers. The Office of Research and Evaluation has collaborated with the Office of Talent to develop and carry out an implementation support plan to identify challenges and successes in year 1. The poster reviews the questions driving this work, as well as the findings from mid-year surveys of residents, mentor teachers, and principals.

19. The Effects of Teacher Caring on Motivational Outcomes in Middle School (Dayna Kline, Lehigh University)

In general, teacher caring predicts students' achievement and motivation (Wentzel, 1997). The present study was interested in the protective effect of teacher caring in the prediction of motivation, particularly among low-achieving students. Participants included 969 middle school students (58% Latino). Teacher caring positively predicted all tested motivational constructs (self-efficacy, attainment value, utility value, cost). A significant interaction between prior achievement and teacher caring emerged in the prediction of cost, such that lower achievers with caring teachers perceived the highest levels of cost; students with lower achievement and caring teachers may invest more time in academics to meet their teachers' expectations. The finding that teacher caring predicted motivation across all levels of prior achievement is promising for the design of classroom-wide interventions to support motivation.

Special thanks to the Neubauer Family Foundation for providing food and beverages for conference attendees.



## **2018 SDP Research, Policy and Practice Conference Conference Resource Tables**

**Atrium**

**May 21, 2018**

The following resource tables will be available during the lunch and networking session. Please stop by to meet the staff and ask questions.

### **Regional Educational Laboratory Mid-Atlantic Table**

We invite all attendees to visit the REL Mid-Atlantic resource table to learn more about how the REL partners with states and districts in our region to conduct, use and apply high quality research and build capacity to use data to improve student outcomes. We work with educators and policymakers in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, and Washington DC to use evidence to improve teaching, learning and school leadership. REL staff will be available to discuss resources related to improving early literacy, school climate, dropout prevention and evidence-based decision making. We are also interested in learning about the priority issues you are facing in your work.

### **School Progress Report (SPR) Table**

We invite all researchers and program staff interested in learning more about the School District of Philadelphia's annual school accountability tool, the School Progress Report (SPR) to visit the SPR table. Team members will be available to provide you with an overview of the SPR, share relevant online resources, demo our internal SPR dashboard, and answer any questions you may have about the SPR. The SPR data is publicly available; if you would like to use this data in your own research, we encourage you to visit the SPR table to learn more about the data files and resources available, as well as the report release timeline, calculation business rules and who to contact with questions.

### **Research Review Committee Table**

We invite all researchers and program staff interested in conducting research in the District to visit the Research Review Committee table. Members of the committee will be available to give you information and answer your questions about the research review process. If you are planning to submit a proposal to conduct research within the District or to request District administrative data, this is a good opportunity to learn about the timeline, required consultations, required documentation and fees, deadlines and how to contact the Research Review Committee for further questions.





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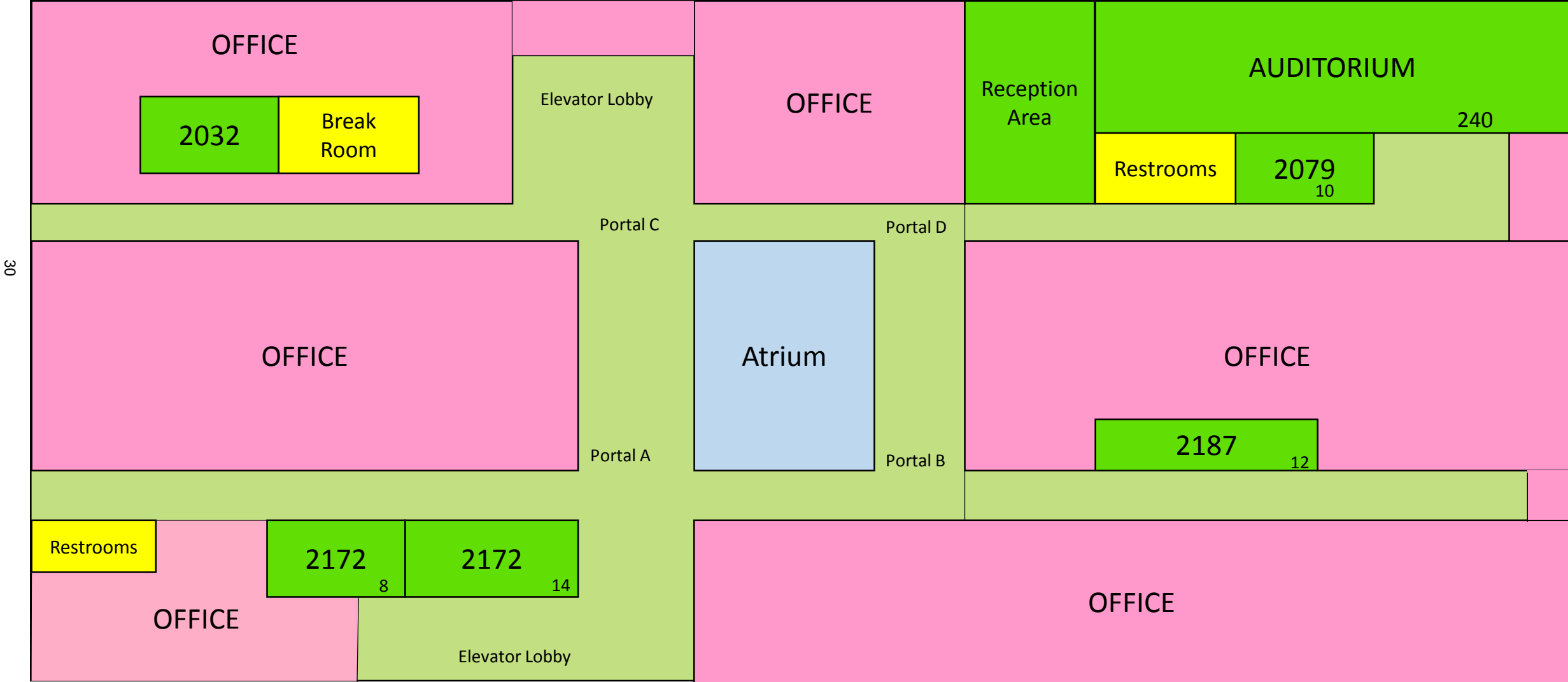
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