



OHIO EDUCATION RESEARCH CENTER

Mission

The Ohio Education Research Center (OERC), is a network of Ohio-based researchers and research institutions, that develops and implements a statewide, preschool-through-workforce research agenda to address critical issues of education practice and policy. The OERC identifies and shares successful practices; responds to the needs of Ohio's educators and policymakers; and signals emerging trends. The OERC communicates its findings broadly, through multiple platforms and networks, producing materials, products and tools to improve educational practice, policy and outcomes.

Vision

To be the source for cutting edge knowledge and resources regarding education and training for Ohio's educators, policymakers and community leaders creating a dynamic cycle of research and practice where the needs of practitioners drive the research agenda and high-quality research has a rapid impact upon practice in the field.

Objectives

The OERC's primary objectives are as follows:

1. Provide timely and high quality evaluation and research products for state, federal and private agencies as well as other policy informing organizations;
2. Maintain a research data base that includes restricted administrative records in a secure environment, while also increasing researcher access to data;
3. Serve as a bridge to education practitioners, researchers and policymakers translating the needs of practitioners into the research agenda and research into actionable practice improving policy at all levels of education; and
4. Bring together diverse resources on education throughout the state to improve access to high quality knowledge.

Background

The OERC was founded in 2012 by a group of researchers from Ohio universities and organizations. The initial charge for the OERC comes from the Ohio Department of Education's Race to the Top program (RttT). This project focuses on the role of the OERC in "develop (ing) and implement (ing) a coherent P-20 education research agenda through collaboration of the Ohio Department of Education and Ohio Board of Regents" (OERC RFP, page 18).

The emphasis on a "coherent research agenda" includes a narrower investigation of the five outcomes that ODE seeks to achieve as part of implementing the RttT program. These include the following:

- Increase high school graduation rates by .5 percent per year,
- Reduce graduation rate gaps by 50 percent,
- Reduce performance gaps by 50 percent,
- Reduce the gap between Ohio and the best-performing states in the nation by 50 percent, and
- More than double the increase in college enrollment for 18 and 19 year olds.

The center is headquartered at The Ohio State University, and is coordinated by the College of Education and Human Ecology and the Center for Human Resource Research. The initial three-year funding goes to a collaborative of researchers from six universities and four organizations. The partners are The Ohio State University, University of Cincinnati, Miami University, Ohio University, Case Western Reserve University, Wright State University, Battelle Memorial Institute, Battelle for Kids, Community Research Partners and the Strategic Research Group.

Organization and Structure

The OERC is a collaborative of researchers with different interests and skills from around the state of Ohio. The administrative host for the OERC is The Ohio State University. Specifically, the College of Education and Human Ecology and the Center for Human Resources Research in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences serve as the primary academic home for the research center. Across the state of Ohio, partners are involved from different universities and organizations.

Administratively, the OERC reports to the State of Ohio through the Policy Council. The Policy Council is made up of key agency and research staff from around the state.

The founding partners coordinate the work of the OERC through a Governance Committee. There are three standing committees, a Research Agenda Committee, a Data Committee, and an Outreach Committee. Membership in each committee includes key participants from State of Ohio agencies and partner organizations.

The standing committees have the following central objectives:

Governance Committee (GC) – The GC serves as the primary administrative agency for the entire OERC. It is chaired by the Director, and representatives are the site leads serving on behalf of their organization. The GC sets overall policies on grant administration, hiring, and serves as advocates for the OERC in the larger state education community.

Research Agenda Committee (RAC) – The RAC develops a yearly research strategy on behalf of the larger OERC, and works with faculty, researchers and state policy makers to implement the strategy. The Research Agenda Committee will also ensure that research produced with OERC funds meet standards of excellence that guarantee the continued reputation of the OERC member institutions.

The primary tasks of the Research Agenda Committee are the following:

- Facilitate the process used to develop and promote long term research;
- Make key investments in long-term research projects that will have a major impact on the field; and
- Work with local, regional, state, federal, and private sources to create development proposals to ensure sustainability.

Outreach Committee (OC) - The OC is charged with developing a strategy to disseminate actionable research to practitioners, policymakers and researchers. Shaping educational practice in positive ways is our number one priority. The Outreach Committee will support targeted, strategic communications about research generated through the OERC and serve as a forum to collect ideas and opinions about how Ohio-based education research can serve the specific needs of a variety of education stakeholders.

The primary tasks of the Outreach Committee are the following:

- Implement an annual conference;
- “Translate” education research into formats and products for education practitioners and policymakers;
- Disseminate research findings through the OERC website, the Best Practices Repository and other channels; and
- Gather timely and relevant feedback to inform the OERC research agenda.

Data Committee (DC) - The DC is charged with designing a data archive that can serve as a resource for ODE and researchers focused on improving educational practice through applied research and evaluation.

The Data Committee will provide the following services:

- Design a data archive that will enable researchers, ODE and other agency staff to access administrative data from the State of Ohio;
- Secure administrative records according to legal, regulatory and administrative code as well as best security practices to ensure resources are appropriately used; and
- Provide services to state government which link data resources together and enable policy makers to take advantage of the long term value of integrating administrative data from a variety of agencies, following their respective security guidelines.

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