

ANNENBERG INSTITUTE

ANNUAL REPORT

*Connecting
People, Evidence,
and Practice*



JULY 2024



Annenberg Institute
BROWN UNIVERSITY



**“Annenberg is
becoming the
primary destination
for practical resources
and discussion about
what it takes to apply
research findings
to the task of school
improvement.”**

NATE SCHWARTZ

Annenberg Institute

Director of Applied Research

ANNENBERG INSTITUTE

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

*Connecting People,
Evidence, and Practice*

annenberg.brown.edu

THE WORK OF THE ANNENBERG INSTITUTE	1
APPLIED RESEARCH TRAINING	2
Training new scholars: Undergraduate Research Fellows	3
Applied Research Training in Action	6
2023-24 Postdoctoral Research Associates	6
Half-Baked Research Seminar Series	7
EdResearch for Action Writers Fellowship	8
Interdisciplinary Workshops	10
Policy in Action	10
Urban Education Policy	11
Distinguished Lecture	12
Education Policy Seminar Series	13
Rethinking Race and Education Seminar Series	13
ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP	14
Leveraging the Power of AI-Enhanced Chatbots	15
Engaged Scholarship in Action: Improving Educational Outcomes	18
Jesse Bruhn	18
John Diamond	18
Margot Jackson	19
Susan Moffitt	19
SUSTAINED PARTNERSHIPS	20
Staffing Rhode Island Schools	21
Sustained Partnerships in Action	24
Research Partnership for Professional Learning (RPPL)	24
Educational Opportunity in Massachusetts	25
Rhode Island Education Research	26
College Day at Brown	27
Brown Tutoring Corps	28
ACTIONABLE KNOWLEDGE	30
EdResearch for Action: Making Evidence Matter	31
EdWorkingPapers	32
EdInstruments	33
ANNENBERG TEAM	34
COMING SOON FROM ANNENBERG	35



As I wrap up my first year as Director of the Annenberg Institute, I have been considering not only our progress this year but the Institute’s impact over the past several decades. I’m honored to be filling the enormous shoes of Ted Sizer, Warren Simmons, and Susanna Loeb, all of whom have shaped the Institute and its legacy. As part of this work, I have been reflecting on the Institute’s early mission, what has changed, and what has stayed the same.

The Institute was truly launched in 1994, with a large grant from the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Foundation to “provoke and nurture the redesign of American schools,” with a mission to “document, analyze and publicize the nature and progress of that redesigning.” Our founding documents highlighted the research-practice divide, centering our work “along the often controversial and troubled ‘fault line’ between those two worlds.” They also anticipated the importance of cross-disciplinary inquiry and the capacity of research to improve education across the country, noting that we would provide “a neutral gathering place for all those concerned about schooling, a site for debate and investigation.”

Thirty years later, the Institute continues to fulfill this mission. Some things have changed and modernized – the “emerging sophisticated telecommunications systems” described in 1994 are quite different today! While the early work focused specifically on differences along socio-economic lines, our current efforts engage centrally with equity and inequality more broadly, highlighting the important intersections of race/ethnicity, class, gender, language, immigrant status, geography, and other dimensions of students’ identities.

But, over the past three decades, much has remained the same. Our work continues to prioritize investigation and research, center equity, focus on impact and improvement, and engage with practice and communities. Through it all, we strive to shape the national conversation about effective and equitable educational practices.

We are especially keen to move the conversation beyond the typical either/or trade-offs and “fault lines” that are often present in education research. We want to center both/and solutions. How can we do partnership research that centers the needs of practitioners AND creates new lines of inquiry that push understanding in our field? How can we maintain intellectual rigor in our research AND answer questions of most importance to policy and practice? How can we attend to the lived experiences of the policymakers and practitioners with whom we work AND focus our attention most directly on improving, and making more equitable, the educational experiences of the youth they serve?

As we continue to evolve and develop as an Institute, we continue to lean into these tensions. I am excited about the work that we are doing, highlighted in this report, and about how we continue to build our partnerships and collaborations with organizations and scholars at Brown and across the country to push forward, together, to equalize and improve educational opportunities for all students.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John P. Papay". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

John Papay
Director

THE WORK OF THE ANNENBERG INSTITUTE

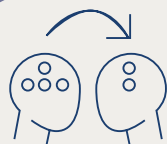


The Annenberg Institute at Brown University brings together scholars across campus and beyond to tackle persistent challenges in education. We seek to advance understanding of the causes and consequences of educational inequality and to reduce this inequality through innovative, multidimensional, and research-informed approaches. Through applied research training, engaged scholarship, sustained partnerships, and efforts to generate actionable knowledge, our goal is to improve the creation, synthesis, and application of educational research.

We prioritize collaborative, multidisciplinary approaches that foster creative problem-solving.

APPLIED RESEARCH TRAINING

Through programs, fellowships, and learning opportunities, Annenberg provides a hub at Brown University for conducting and engaging with education research for impact.





TRAINING NEW SCHOLARS

Undergraduate Research Fellows

The Undergraduate Research Fellows for Social Science and Public Policy is an intensive, full-time, paid summer internship. The program prepares Brown undergraduates from a diverse array of backgrounds, life experiences, and academic concentrations to engage in rigorous empirical research in the social sciences to improve our understanding of the education system, inequality, public health, and population well-being. The goal of the program is to ensure that every Brown undergraduate, and especially those who may not see themselves as having a sufficient quantitative background, has the opportunity to engage with quantitative social science research and learn about related career paths in social policy. Sponsored by the Annenberg Institute, the program is run in Population Studies and Training Center and led by faculty members Jesse Bruhn, Anna Aizer, and Margot Jackson.

TRAINING NEW SCHOLARS

Now in its fifth year, the program starts with a data science “boot camp” that introduces Undergraduate Research Fellows to in-demand skills in statistical analysis and data management. Fellows are then matched with faculty who are running ongoing, real-world research projects. They receive direct guidance, mentorship, and instruction while actively learning about and conducting research.

Our approach emphasizes mentorship and peer learning and allows fellows to develop relationships with faculty members that often continue during their time at Brown and beyond. Throughout the program, fellows learn about cutting-edge topics in social science with a focus on career opportunities in empirical social science both inside and outside of academia.



**Alumni from the Undergraduate Research Fellows Program
are already impacting the field with their work:**



RESEARCHING

Predoctoral fellow at Stanford Institute
for Economic Policy Research (SIEPR)

Research Associate NERA Economic Consulting

Research Assistant at the Center on Health
Policy at Brookings

Business analysts for consulting firms

STUDYING

Ph.D. Student in Economics at Yale

JD Candidate at Harvard Law

Fulbright Scholar in Orizaba,
Veracruz, México

2024 degree recipient and
Community Service Award
recipient in the Brown University
Master's in Public Affairs program



IMPACTING PRACTICE

Software engineer at Verily
Precision Health Care

Election Project Coordinator at
Edison Research

Educational Programs Coordinator
Food and Drug Law Institute (FDLI)



APPLIED RESEARCH TRAINING IN ACTION

2023-24 Postdoctoral Research Associates

BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS

Postdoctoral Research Associates join a diverse community of scholars committed to educational equity and improvement for a two-year fellowship. They participate in collaborative research activities with our affiliated faculty on issues related to US PreK-16 education policy. Fellows develop and apply skills in rigorous education policy analysis through research, training, and convenings.



EMILY HANDSMAN

Emily holds a Ph.D. in sociology, with a certificate in education sciences, from Northwestern University, and a BA in English from Barnard College. She will be starting as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at Rutgers University.

HANNAH KISTLER

Hannah holds a Ph.D. in Education Policy from Vanderbilt University as well as a Master of Arts in Teaching from Marian University and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Smith College.





CATHERINE MATA

Catherine holds a Ph.D. in Public Policy with a specialization in Economics from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. She received an M.A. in Economic Policy Analysis from UMBC, and a *Licenciatura* degree, and a B.S. in Economics from the University of Costa Rica.

GREER MELLON

Greer holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from Columbia University, an M.A. in Statistics from Columbia University, an M.Phil. in International Development Studies from the University of Oxford, and a B.A. in History from Columbia University.



HALF-BAKED RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES

Learning and sharpening research in progress

Annenberg's Half-Baked Seminar Series is a bi-weekly "works in progress" seminar centered on empirical research related to education and education policy. Speakers come from a variety of disciplinary traditions and we seek to be inclusive to a broad, multidisciplinary audience. This series gives faculty, postdoctoral researchers, and doctoral students the chance to receive feedback and leverage the expertise of Annenberg's multidisciplinary community to work through challenges and find new solutions and directions for their work.

"I received really great feedback, both in terms of pushing me to better understand the state context, as well as help around modeling and future directions for the research."

HANNAH KISTLER

Postdoctoral Research Associate

EdResearch for Action Writers Fellowship

Coaching researchers to write for impact

Now in its second year, the EdResearch Writers Fellowship is a first-of-its-kind program that helps education researchers more effectively communicate their research to practitioner audiences in order to increase the reach and impact of their work. In partnership with Carrie Conaway, Senior Lecturer at Harvard Graduate School of Education, the program is comprised of education researchers whose scholarship spans a variety of topics, from the educational impact of health policies to school discipline and policing to college readiness. Through a combination of workshops, 1:1 coaching, and collaborative working groups, the program creates a vibrant and growing network of scholars who write for impact and make a real difference in education policy. The first cohort of fellows concluded in September 2023, and by December 2023, the 11 fellows had published nine op/eds, blog posts, and articles in outlets such as *EdWeek*, *Brookings*, *The Conversation*, *The Learning Professional*, and several local newspapers.

Meet the Second Cohort

EdResearch Writers Fellows



**TIA
NAVELENE
BARNES**

Department of Human
Development & Family
Sciences, University of
Delaware



**REBECCA
A. CRUZ**

School of Education,
Johns Hopkins
University



**KALENA E.
CORTES**

Department of Public
Service and Administration,
Texas A&M University



**ELIZABETH
DHUEY**

Department
of Management,
University of Toronto



**SEBASTIAN
MUNOZ-NAJAR
GALVEZ**

Data Science and
Education, Harvard
University



MATT GIANI

Department of
Sociology, University
of Texas at Austin



**DAVID
HOUSTON**

College of Education and
Human Development,
George Mason University



**BLAKE H.
HELLER**

Hobby School of Public
Affairs, University of
Houston



**ANDREW
KWOK**

Department of Teaching,
Learning, and Culture,
Texas A&M University



**LEIGH
MCLEAN**

School of Education,
University of Delaware



**EMILY
RAUSCHER**

Department of
Sociology, Brown
University



**LUCY C.
SORENSEN**

Rockefeller College of
Public Affairs and Policy,
University at Albany, SUNY



Sebastian
Munoz-Najar Galvez

INTERDISCIPLINARY WORKSHOPS

Preparing researchers with cutting-edge skills

In partnership with the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs and the Population Studies and Training Center, the Annenberg Institute hosted intensive workshops to prepare researchers and Ph.D. students with innovative research skills.

- ***Text-As-Data: An overview of core ideas and the main programming libraries for text analysis in R***
facilitated by Sebastian Munoz-Najar Galvez, Bluhm Family Assistant Professor of Data Science and Education at Harvard Graduate School of Education
- ***QuantCrit: An introduction to key tenets and applications of Quantitative Critical Theory for researchers***
facilitated by Wendy Castillo, Lecturer of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University

POLICY IN ACTION

Partnering with international and public affairs

Our partnership with the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs enabled ten students in the Master's in Public Affairs program to learn about educational research and policy from Annenberg faculty and staff. These semester-long *Policy in Action Projects* culminated in a set of actionable recommendations in three key areas:

- ***Envisioning Pathways for Climate Resilience and Adaptation Across U.S. K-12 Public Schools***
- ***High School Immigrant Newcomer Students in Massachusetts Public Schools***
- ***Teacher Induction: Supporting Early Career Teachers***



Wendy Castillo



URBAN EDUCATION POLICY

Supporting education policy graduate students

Three graduate students in Brown University's Urban Education Policy (UEP) master's degree program spent the year working with Annenberg on a range of critical initiatives. UEP student Fatou Diokhane was the Institute's 2023-24 Ruth J. Simmons Policy Scholar. This prestigious award includes a full-tuition scholarship and recognizes the UEP student who best embodies the values of former Brown University president Ruth J. Simmons, with a particular commitment to educational equity and social justice. Fatou's experiences in the New York City education system as a multilingual learner and her participation in a college access program inspired her to study urban education policy at Brown.

Fatou worked closely with the Annenberg Institute's EdResearch for Action team. She helped establish the EdResearch Advisory Board, defining the goals for the new initiative, engaging stakeholders, and managing the logistics of standing up a new board. As a result, her enhanced collaboration and communication skills will enable her to manage the complexities involved with applying educational research to policy and practice.

This year we welcome Dionna Jenkins as the 2024-25 Ruth J. Simmons UEP Scholar. A writer by training, Dionna joins us by way of College Visions, a college access program in Rhode Island.

“Educational equity to me means that every child has access to the teachers, facilities, and resources to excel in the classroom and to feel comfortable in their school environment.”

FATOU DIOKHANE

2023-24 Ruth J. Simmons Policy Scholar





DISTINGUISHED LECTURE

Annenberg's Inaugural Distinguished Lecture

Gloria Ladson-Billings, Professor Emerita, Department of Curriculum & Instruction at the University of Wisconsin, delivered the Distinguished Lecture titled "Time for a Hard Reset: Reenvisioning Education for Equity." With over 200 students and faculty in attendance, Dr. Ladson-Billings reinforced the centrality of relationships in resetting expectations and reimagining what is possible in education. During her visit to Annenberg, Dr. Ladson-Billings joined undergraduate and graduate courses, where students and faculty were thrilled to meet and learn from such a prominent scholar the field whose scholarship they had been integrating in courses and internships all year. Dr. Ladson-Billings also engaged with students and hosted a faculty roundtable to discuss opportunities and challenges in research related to race and educational equity.



EDUCATION POLICY SEMINAR SERIES

Advancing educational equity, opportunity, and policy



DAVID EVANS

Senior Fellow, Center
for Global Development

*Changing Perceptions of Educational
Returns in Low- and Middle-Income
Countries: A Meta-Analysis*



NALETTE BRODNAX

Assistant Professor of Public
Policy, Georgetown University

*Top-Down Discipline: The Role of
Carceral Ideology in the Formation of
Public Schools' Disciplinary Regimes*



SHAMEKA POWELL

Associate Professor of
Educational Studies,
Tufts University

*Predatory Inclusion: Mapping How
High School De-tracking Policies
Undermine Equity*



ERICKA WEATHERS

Assistant Professor of Education
Policy, University of Pennsylvania

*Absence Unexcused: Using
Administrative Data to Explore Patterns
and Predictors of Habitual Truancy in
Pennsylvania*



FRANCIS A. PEARMAN

Assistant Professor of Education,
Stanford University

*School Closures and District
Finance in the United States*



LUCY SORENSEN

Associate Professor of Public
Administration & Policy, University
at Albany, SUNY

*On the Margin: Who Receives a Juvenile
Referral from School and What Effect
Does It Have?*



Natasha Warikoo

RETHINKING RACE AND EDUCATION SEMINAR SERIES

Building on the inaugural year of Annenberg's Race & Education Seminar Series, the Annenberg Institute hosted **Natasha Warikoo** for a talk *Affirmative Action in College Admissions: What it was, what it did, and what's next*. Led by John Diamond, Annenberg Professor and Ford Foundation Professor of Sociology and Education Policy, the seminar series provides our education community a space to learn and engage with evolving interdisciplinary ideas about race and education.

ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP

Annenberg is connecting with leading scholars in the field and supporting a growing body of cutting-edge research that builds new knowledge of promising practices and the conditions that enable students to reach their full potential.





Leveraging the Power of AI-Enhanced Chatbots

LINDSAY PAGE

Annenberg Associate Professor of Education Policy

Lindsay Page's groundbreaking research on AI-enhanced, text-based chatbot communication, conducted in partnership with Georgia State University (GSU), marks a significant advancement in supporting student persistence in higher education. Recognizing the potential of text-based communication to break down informational barriers and streamline administrative processes, Page and her team investigated its effectiveness in improving student outcomes.

LEVERAGING THE POWER OF AI-ENHANCED CHATBOTS

This collaboration led to the development of Pounce, an AI-enabled chatbot named after GSU's beloved mascot, that became a valuable resource for students. Through Pounce, the university provides students with proactive outreach and support throughout their academic journeys. By delivering timely reminders, personalized feedback, and access to essential academic resources via text messages, Pounce seamlessly integrates into students' daily routines. For several years, Page has collaborated with GSU to test the effectiveness of Pounce in supporting students to navigate required administrative tasks and processes. More recently, the team has incorporated this tool into students' core academic experiences.

Targeting high-enrollment courses with historically high rates of DFW (D, F, or Withdraw) grades, Page and her team conducted a set of randomized controlled trials to assess the chatbot's impact on student engagement and performance in specific courses in political science and economics. Some of these courses are key gateways to certain majors. If students do not do well enough in these courses, they are unable to continue in that area of study.

The team, including two Annenberg Postdoctoral Fellows, published their results as [a recent working paper](#) through Annenberg's EdWorkingPapers series. The chatbot significantly improved students' final grades and reduced negative course outcomes across multiple semesters and academic disciplines. The team also found compelling evidence that the chatbot communication shifted students' final course grades, increasing the likelihood that students would earn a B or higher in a course, and found suggestive evidence that the chatbot encourages course completion. Importantly, these benefits were consistent across diverse student populations.

Page and her team will build on this success through continued collaboration with the National Institute for Student Success (NISS) at Georgia State University, which received a \$7.6 million grant to further explore the benefits of AI-enhanced classroom chatbots. Implementation sites for this project will include GSU, the Perimeter Colleges (two-year colleges), the University of Central Florida (a Hispanic Serving Institution), and Morgan State University (an HBCU). "This project," said Page, "will provide a unique opportunity to dramatically scale course-specific chatbots to additional academic subjects, students, and campus contexts, and to deeply investigate how best to incorporate these tools in service of improved learning outcomes for students."



“This project will provide a unique opportunity to dramatically scale course-specific chatbots to additional academic subjects, students, and campus contexts, and to deeply investigate how best to incorporate these tools in service of improved learning outcomes for students.”

LINDSAY PAGE

Annenberg Associate Professor of Education Policy



ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP IN ACTION

Improving Educational Outcomes



JESSE BRUHN

*Annenberg Assistant Professor of Education
and Assistant Professor of Economics*

Using AI and machine learning, Jesse Bruhn aims to revolutionize the understanding and utilization of standardized testing data in education. Recognizing that current practices reduce complex performance patterns to a single, often misleading number, he seeks to leverage the wealth of data available to provide a more nuanced understanding of student learning and teacher impact. Collaborating with the Texas Education Research Center, Bruhn's team is developing algorithms to transform vast data sets into actionable insights, significantly enhancing decision-making processes. By digitizing and analyzing questions with machine learning, the project aims to design tests that better predict long-term student success, thus offering a pathway toward significant changes in how we measure and predict student outcomes. This initiative promises to improve educational outcomes by creating less stressful, more meaningful assessments, potentially reshaping standardized testing in America.

JOHN DIAMOND

Ford Foundation Professor of Sociology and Education Policy

The Comprehensive Assessment of Leadership Learning/Equity-Centered Leadership project assembles a team of nationally recognized researchers specializing in school leadership, equity, improvement, research and instrument design, and data analytics. Their goal is to inform and support equity-centered leadership across eight large urban school districts in the United States. These leaders are crucial in establishing conditions that enhance teaching, learning, and community engagement for all students and families.

The project, co-led by Diamond, documents the development of equity-centered leadership pipeline programs in each district, focusing on challenges, outcomes, and the actions taken to implement these programs. It examines how districts create networks to support equity-centered principals and improve educational practices that transform teaching, learning, and assessment.





MARGOT JACKSON

Professor of Sociology

Margot Jackson's work focuses on state-level public investments and inequality in child development. Her research examines the effects of public investments on family resources, such as material hardship, income, and program participation, and their impact on child health and development. Additionally, Jackson explores how these investments influence socioeconomic and racial/ethnic disparities in child outcomes. With colleagues at the Urban Institute and the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C., Jackson is building more comprehensive data on the social safety net for children in the United States, and analyzing the impact of both safety net generosity and spending on children's educational and other developmental outcomes. This knowledge is useful for policymakers who are choosing among many possible forms of child-focused investment in a highly polarized political environment. Jackson was recently appointed Director of the Population Studies and Training Center at Brown University and co-edited a volume in *The Annals of the AAPSS*, *Overlapping Public Investments in Child Well-Being: A Reconsideration of the Social Safety Net*.

SUSAN MOFFITT

John Hazen White Professor of Public Policy

Recently appointed as the John Hazen White Professor of Public Policy at Brown University, Moffitt published *Reforming the Reform: Problems of Public Schooling in the American Welfare State* with co-authors Michaela Krug O'Neill, and David K. Cohen. The book identifies common problems that arise when policymakers try to operationalize ambitious reform ideas. Focusing on state leaders, district leaders, and superintendents, the authors analyze the challenges of putting policy into practice through over 250 interviews, network analysis, and extensive survey data. Their research, which includes insights from Tennessee and California, offers a comprehensive look at the broader responsibilities of public schools within the American social safety net and suggests pathways for improving education policy.



SUSTAINED PARTNERSHIPS

Annenberg's partnerships connect researchers and practitioners, deepening relationships across the educational system and transforming policy and practice through ongoing collaboration.





Staffing Rhode Island Schools

With looming staffing shortages, potential budget reductions, and increasing demands to support student needs, state and district leaders are actively grappling with numerous thorny school staffing issues. In May 2024, Annenberg brought together 90 district leaders, researchers, state-level personnel, and representatives of Rhode Island’s educator preparation programs for our second annual Superintendents Convening, hosted in partnership with the Rhode Island Foundation and the Rhode Island School Superintendents Association (RISSA).

The convening is one part of the local partnership work, engaging with the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), the Providence Public School District (PPSD), and other districts across the state through RISSA. Staffing schools has been a central focus of Annenberg’s partnership research over the past several years as districts have navigated shifting landscapes before, during, and after the pandemic.

The convening brought together leaders around a common set of facts to wrestle with challenges and plan for new opportunities. It built on three key goals:

- 1 **Connecting local evidence to practice**
- 2 **Leveraging national research and insight for local impact**
- 3 **Building connections and leveraging expertise among local practitioners**

Brown University President Christina Paxson, Rhode Island Foundation President David Cicilline, RIDE Commissioner Angélica Infante-Green, and RISSA President James Erinakes kicked off the day with calls for increased collaboration, innovation, and urgency to tackle important staffing challenges.

Grounding the day's work in evidence, the Institute's RI Data and Analytics team presented key themes from partnership research, examining the interrelated challenges of building and sustaining an effective

teacher workforce in the state and developing key strategies and policies that can address them. Nate Schwartz, Annenberg's Director of Applied Research, highlighted changes in Rhode Island's workforce over the past decade and projections for what the next few years might bring. The team also provided each participant with data profiles from their district to lay the groundwork for a day of sharing evidence-informed strategies to help transform policy and practice in Rhode Island.

Superintendents, local practitioners, educator preparation providers, and national experts shared their experiences and expertise throughout the day. Featured presentations, panel discussions, and break-out sessions provided opportunities to wrestle with the evidence about Rhode Island schools in strategic areas of concern, including: diversifying the workforce, building the career and technical education teacher pipeline, navigating staff reductions, retaining early career teachers, creating alternate pathways into the classroom, and staffing to serve multilingual learners. Panelists and presenters included partners from the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, Providence College, College Unbound, Brown University's MAT and UEP programs, Roger Williams University, Education Resource Strategies, the Rhode Island Department of Education, and the Equity Institute, as well as teachers and leaders from Central Falls, Cranston, East Providence, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket public schools.





“This event was a thoughtful balance of research, data, and real-life, in-the-trenches stories of the challenges of teacher recruitment and retention. The discussions were relevant to our context yet also offered new approaches to think outside of the norm.”

DIANE SANNA

Bristol-Warren Assistant Superintendent

SUSTAINED PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION

RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING (RPPL)

annenberg.brown.edu/rppl



Understanding the features of and enabling conditions for effective teacher professional learning

The Research Partnership for Professional Learning (RPPL) is a collective of professional learning (PL) practitioners, researchers, educators, and funders committed to advancing educational equity by improving how teachers learn and grow in the classroom. Together, we study teacher and educator learning to identify, share, and enact PL that improves teachers' instructional practices and students' classroom experiences, well-being, and academic growth.

Annenberg incubated RPPL from its launch in 2021 and is now the organization's core research arm. We are partnering with PL organizations and school districts across the country to identify the design features of more effective and equitable PL. Some recent work has centered on shared measurement in PL, coaching practices, and the role of Artificial Intelligence in teacher PL.

PUBLICATIONS

*[Measuring Teacher Professional Learning: Why It's Hard
and What We Can Do About It](#)*

*[Parsing Coaching Practice: A Systematic Framework for
Describing Coaching Discourse](#)*

*[AI in Professional Learning: Navigating Opportunities
and Challenges for Educators](#)*

For more information, visit annenberg.brown.edu/rppl and view the learning agenda.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY IN MASSACHUSETTS

Examining the experiences of immigrant newcomers in MA high schools

In January, the Educational Opportunity In Massachusetts team brought key stakeholders in the Massachusetts education community together to grapple with the evidence presented in the newest publication: [Rising Numbers, Unmet Needs: Immigrant Newcomers in Massachusetts High Schools](#). The project builds on Annenberg's long-standing partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Department of Higher Education (DHE) to analyze how students progress to and through the state's public education system and into the workforce.

This current project arose from conversations with DESE about immigrant newcomers to Massachusetts high schools, a rapidly growing and vulnerable group of students. The report found that the number of high-school newcomers in Massachusetts has nearly tripled since 2008, while their academic progress has lagged and college enrollment rates have dropped dramatically.

The Boston Foundation hosted a forum with more than 200 guests to engage with the report. Javier Juarez, Director of the Boston Foundation's Latino Equity Fund, launched the event with a challenge – to strengthen the way the city and the state welcome new immigrant students. “There is no other way to say it, this is the definition of an intersectional topic,” Juarez said.



annenberg.brown.edu/edopportunity

“It will take all of us to move the needle for the betterment of our newcomer community who need us now more than ever before.”

After comments by Jeffrey Riley, DESE Commissioner, Annenberg's Ann Mantil presented the report's findings. Moderator John Papay then welcomed four distinguished panelists to the stage: Dr. Almi Abeyta, Superintendent of Chelsea Public Schools; Allison Balter, Director of the Office of Language Acquisition at DESE; Rania Caldwell, Director of Multilingual Learners at Woburn Public Schools; and Dr. Carola Suarez-Orozco, Professor in Residence at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and Director of the Immigration Initiative at Harvard University.

Panelist Allison Balter, also a former principal of a newcomer high school program, highlighted the importance of the work the Annenberg team did in laying the groundwork for this crucial conversation by leveraging statewide data. “We have not been able to have this conversation in the same way before, and for a very technical reason. We do not have a specific state or federal definition of the word ‘newcomers’ as a subgroup,” Balter said. DESE and Annenberg worked together to use existing data to identify high-school newcomers and examine the outcomes and experiences of these students across the state for the first time.

RHODE ISLAND EDUCATION RESEARCH

Building knowledge that improves schools and student experiences across the state

annenberg.brown.edu/ri-research

Publications

Post-Pandemic Public School Landscape

Annenberg's first landscape report of the state of public education in Rhode Island sought to understand how the pandemic impacted enrollment and student outcomes. The report and a launch event at the Rhode Island Foundation served as a call to action for stakeholders across the state.

[The State of Recovery: Rhode Island's Post-Pandemic Public School Landscape](#)

Educator Staffing

Annenberg has worked closely with RIDE, PPSD, and Rhode Island Education Preparation Providers (EPPs) to understand the local teacher workforce. This work has involved leveraging several administrative data sources to build, track and project key staffing indicators related to teacher recruitment and retention, with a focus on diversifying the teacher workforce and staffing hard-to-fill positions. Analyses have informed retention strategies in PPSD, workforce planning and pathways, statewide teacher diversification goals, and district-EPP partnerships.

[Staffing Schools in Providence: Tracking Key Metrics](#)

ESSER Spending

In partnership with RIDE, Annenberg has tracked ESSER spending plans and patterns across the state. We have focused on ways in which ESSER impacted spending on staffing and personnel as well as district contracting and purchases. The recent analysis takes a deep dive into pandemic recovery funding for curriculum, professional learning, and instructional technology.

[Tracking Rhode Island's COVID-19 Recovery: District Investments in Curriculum, Professional Learning and Technology](#)

Practitioner Networks

Annenberg has launched several practitioner networks to support evidence-to-practice connections across the state. These networks combine three core elements:

- A local networked learning approach that shares local expertise and best practice
- A continuous improvement model grounded in the state and district data and evidence
- A connection to the national evidence base that will leverage RPPL and other research learnings to identify the strategies that are most likely to make a meaningful difference to ongoing practice

The Rhode Island Summer Learning Network is in its third year and has resulted in Summer Learning Data Reports that include recommendations for improving the monitoring and implementation of summer learning programs. Annenberg's Professional Learning Network launched in June. This collaboration supports districts' continuous improvement efforts related to curriculum-based professional learning with a special focus on meeting the needs of diverse learners. Bringing districts together creates a space to work through the challenges of effective implementation across different contexts and facilitate shared learning that centers research-based strategies and data use.

Practitioner Workshops

Through a sustained partnership with the Rhode Island School Superintendents Association (RISSA), over 100 Rhode Island district leaders attended Annenberg's workshops on professional learning for implementing high-quality instructional materials, supporting multilingual learners while implementing high-quality instructional materials in math, and serving the needs of immigrant-origin students and English Learners.

COLLEGE DAY AT BROWN

Strengthening collaboration and connections with local schools

Now in its third year, College Day at Brown brought together 350 students from 17 high schools from the cities of Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls to explore Brown University's classes, athletic programs, and community engagement opportunities. Annenberg hosts this signature event in partnership with the Office of the President.

Participants took campus tours, interacted one-on-one with Brown students, staff, and faculty, engaged in hands-on learning experiences, enjoyed lunch, and listened to panel discussions on topics including the admissions process. This program aims to introduce or reinforce the idea of higher education to students, fostering pathways and generating enthusiasm for pursuing post-secondary education at Brown and other institutions.





BROWN TUTORING CORPS

Supporting the academic needs of local students

The Brown Tutoring Corps (BTC) is a collaboration between the Annenberg Institute and the Swearer Center for Public Service. The BTC matches Brown University students with local elementary and secondary schools to support youth to make academic gains, develop mindsets and skills that contribute to success in college, and build relationships with Brown University. Partnership sites for the 2023-24 school year included Hope High School, Nathan Bishop Middle School, Vartan Gregorian Elementary School, and the Times2 STEM Academy in Providence, Shea and Tolman High Schools in Pawtucket, and the Providence Public Library. 102 Brown University students provided tutoring and academic mentoring in Providence and Pawtucket in 2024.

“Our students have truly appreciated the collaborative relationship that we have formed with the BTC tutors. They have learned valuable test-taking strategies from these talented young college students, whom they can easily see themselves emulating since they are close in age.”

JENNIFER SAWYER

*School Counselor, Department Chairperson
Tolman High School, Pawtucket School Department*

ACTIONABLE KNOWLEDGE

Annenberg's knowledge initiatives catalyze conversations across the research landscape, synthesizing what we know and mobilizing practitioners, policymakers, and researchers toward collaborative impact.



EdResearch for Action

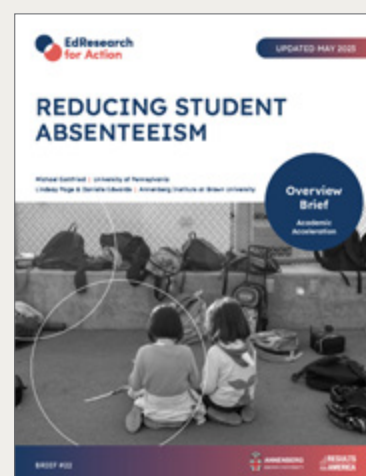
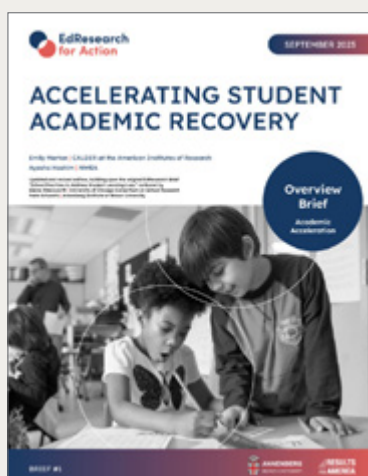
Making Evidence Matter

Researchers often struggle to generate real impact and education leaders lack the guidance and support they need to turn research into action. EdResearch for Action – a joint initiative of the Annenberg Institute at Brown University and Results for America – brings together education leaders, policymakers, and researchers to partner on effective, evidence-based strategies for improving schools. Over the past year, the team has advanced this critical work by publishing new research briefs and hosting webinars and workshops to foster strong collaboration and information sharing between researchers and practitioners.

These research briefs have covered a spectrum of vital topics, from strategies to accelerate student academic recovery to supports for multilingual students and those experiencing homelessness. Written by top researchers in the field, these briefs distill complex findings into actionable advice, empowering educators to make informed decisions grounded in evidence. The briefs have influenced federal and state guidance, as well as resources developed by advocacy organizations. By synthesizing research into digestible formats and ensuring widespread distribution, EdResearch for Action continues to catalyze important conversations and drive meaningful change in education.

In tandem with these briefs, the EdResearch for Action team has hosted a series of webinars and workshops. From a Virtual Brown Bag with the National Network of Education Research-Practice Partnerships (NNERPP) on supporting homeless students to a recent Rhode Island Educators Workshop on immigrant-origin students and English learners, these events provide crucial space for researchers and practitioners to connect, learn from one another, and work through the challenges of using research to guide educational practices. Through partnerships with key organizations like NNERPP, the National Newcomers Network, and EdTrust, EdResearch for Action ensures that research briefs directly inform policy decisions and educational practices at local, state, and national levels.

The newly formed EdResearch Advisory Board will also help elevate the voice and knowledge of educators to shape research for real-world impact. Representing multiple levels of the K-12 education ecosystem across more than 20 states, board members work with EdResearch for Action brief authors and staff members to directly contribute to the brief-creation process. This unique opportunity empowers educators who are often left out of traditional research processes to actively shape and refine education research. By fostering a participatory approach, the Board will contribute to the democratization of evidence and create more inclusive, relevant, and impactful education initiatives.



Learn more at edresearchforaction.org

EdWorkingPapers

The premier source of new and rigorous research in education policy

edworkingpapers.com

EdWorkingPapers is a premier national working paper series and a trusted, centralized hub for high-quality research across a wide array of education policy topics. By dismantling barriers to disseminating and accessing cutting-edge studies, EdWorkingPapers strengthens connections within the research community and empowers policymakers with the evidence they need to craft effective policies.

In the past year, there have been several updates to the EdWorkingPapers series to enhance its mission of providing prompt and open access to high-quality papers from multiple disciplines relevant to education policy. A new Review Board composed of top scholars in various fields of education research reviews submitted papers and provides direct feedback to authors. The new Advisory Panel of five additional top scholars helps the series to better achieve the mission.

In the past year, over:

200

New and updated
EdWorkingPapers

50

EdWorkingPapers
publications
covered by major
media outlets

30,000

Downloads

4,000

Email newsletter
subscribers

REVIEW BOARD



**NATE
SCHWARTZ**

Annenberg
Institute at
Brown, Co-chair



**SUSANNA
LOEB**

Stanford
University,
Co-chair



**DOMINIQUE
BAKER**

University of
Delaware



**JOHN
EASTON**

University
of Chicago



**CHRISTINA
WEILAND**

University of
Michigan

ADVISORY PANEL

Elizabeth Bettini, Boston University

George Farkas, University of California, Irvine

Maithreyi Gopalan, Pennsylvania State University

Jing Liu, University of Maryland

Philip Oreopoulos, University of Toronto

EdInstruments

Free online repository of measurement tools

edstruments.org

EdInstruments identifies and catalogs available measurement tools to help a broad audience, including researchers, school-based personnel, and district leaders, understand, compare, and choose the appropriate tools for their needs.

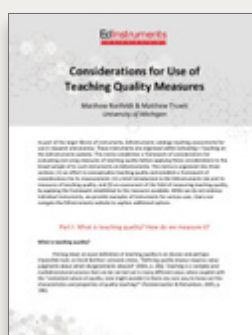
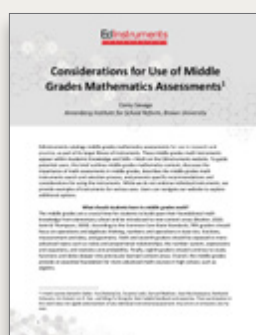
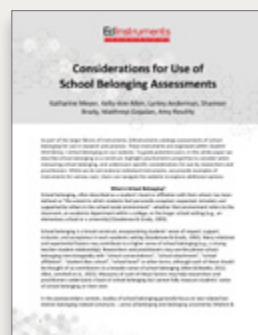
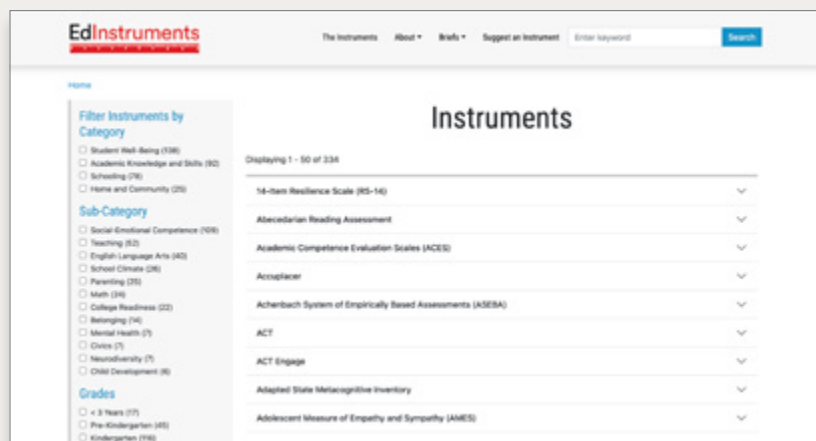
This year, EdInstruments has been gathering user feedback and planning to enhance the sustainability and utility of the EdInstruments website. The team collaborated closely with researchers and funders and sought input from state and district leaders ranging from agencies like the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction to districts like the Los Altos School District in Northern California.

In the coming months, EdInstruments will revamp its organization system, provide toolkits for district-level improvement areas, and develop an AI system to dynamically update the instrument library. These advancements will solidify EdInstruments as a go-to resource for educators and policymakers seeking quality measurement tools.

In the past year:

100,000+
Site Visitors

7,000+
File Downloads



ANNENBERG INSTITUTE STAFF

John Papay | Director

Nathaniel Schwartz | Director of Applied Research

Katie Doyle | Managing Director

Finance, Operations, and Communications

Samuel Madison | Assistant Director of Operations

Sam Stockwell | Associate Director of Communications

Yurixi Villa | Grant and Finance Manager

Nichole Addeo | Web Producer and Digital Content Strategist

Diana Canales | Institute Coordinator

Alexander Lyte | Grant and Finance Specialist

Rhode Island Education Research

Kate Donohue | Director of RI Research Partnerships and Analytics

Brenda Santos | Director of RI Research Partnerships and Networks

Andrew Camp | Senior Research Associate

Kirk Murrell | Research Project Manager

Cassia Caruth | Research Associate

Bila Djamaoeddin | Research Associate

Gisselle Rodriguez Benitez | Research Associate

Annenberg EdExchange

Christina Claiborne | Research Project Director, EdResearch for Action

Aizat Nurshatayeva | Senior Research Associate, EdWorking Papers

Curran Mahowald | Research Project Manager, EdInstruments

Isabel Fitzpatrick | Networks and Engagement Manager

Research Partnership for Professional Learning

Arielle Boguslav | Senior Research Associate

Carolyn Fagan | Research Project Manager

Brendon Krall | Research Project Manager

Educational Opportunity in Massachusetts

Ann Mantil | Senior Research Associate

Aubrey McDonough | Research Project Manager

Emma Zorfass | Research Project Manager

Ian Ferguson | Research Associate

James LoPresti | Research Associate

Education Systems and Climate Change Initiative

Sohil Malik | Research Associate



ANNENBERG IN 2024-25

COMING SOON...

Christopher Cleveland joins the Annenberg Institute as Assistant Professor of Education and Education Policy.

We are growing: This summer, the Institute will welcome 5 new postdoctoral research associates and 7 new research staff. We will also welcome 34 Faculty Affiliates and 10 Doctoral Affiliates from across the University.

The Institute launched **Faculty Seed And Acceleration grants** to support scholars across the University to develop and extend research that equalizes and improves educational opportunities for students. These funds support cutting-edge research projects, efforts to bring researchers together to address pressing challenges, and direct engagement between researchers and practitioners to advance educational opportunity and equity. The grants will support 10 projects, including substantial efforts in Higher Education Access and Climate Change and Education. Funds also will support a range of Doctoral Student Projects.

The Institute will support two **Community Engaged Education Research** projects, partnerships between Brown faculty and local communities. One will engage Education Department faculty to build capacity for evidence-based planning around governance and funding in Central Falls. The other will support faculty from the School of Public Health who will examine illness-related school absenteeism data in partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Education and the Rhode Island Department of Health.



