



Second Annual MEP Research Symposium Partnering for Progress

April 25th, 2019, 4:00-6:30 pm

The Spark Building

ABOUT MEP

The **Madison Education Partnership (MEP)** is a research-practice partnership between the Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER) and the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD). MEP's mission is to collaboratively engage in supporting high-quality, problem-based research; contribute to policy discussions; and regularly disseminate findings to the research community, MMSD, and the public in order to improve the experiences and individual outcomes of all MMSD students.

MEP is designed to identify and address areas where problems of practice prioritized by the district intersect with the research expertise and interests of UW-Madison faculty. MEP is collaboratively directed by UW-Madison and MMSD research leaders. Their work is guided by a **Steering Committee** comprised of university and district leaders, and an **Advisory Council** comprised of representatives from the Madison community. MEP conducts research via two avenues; **Directed research** is designed and carried out by MEP directors and staff, and **Supported research** is carried out by other University faculty and research staff.

ABOUT MMSD

The **Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD)** is the second largest school district in Wisconsin and serves a diverse student body of over 27,000 students in 50 schools and alternative programs. MMSD has a simple but bold vision—that every school will be a thriving school that prepares every student to graduate from high school ready for college, career and community.

ABOUT WCER

The **Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER)** at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Education is an incubator for advances in education policy and practice. It provides services and resources for researchers, graduate students and their collaborators, as well as educators, funders and communities locally and around the world. WCER's mission is to improve educational outcomes for diverse student populations, impact education practice positively, and foster collaborations among academic disciplines and practitioners.

AGENDA

4:00 pm — Welcome

Welcome by Bob Mathieu, Director of the Wisconsin Center for Education Research, and Ricardo Jara, Chief of Staff for MMSD

4:20-5:30 pm

How can early learning enhance equitable outcomes for Madison students?

Early Learning Research Presentations

- *Enhancing the Quality of Instruction in 4K Study* presented by Culleen Witthuhn
- *Teacher-Child Interactions, Teacher Beliefs, and Student Outcomes in 4K Classrooms*, presented by Katie Ostrander
- *Family Decision Making about 4K Enrollment*, presented by Beth Graue
- *Collaborating around the Transition to Kindergarten*, presented by Beth Vaade

Early Childhood Responses from the Field
Interactive Discussion

5:30-5:45 pm — Break

5:45-6:30 pm

What does school attendance mean for equitable educational outcomes?

What Happens When Children Miss School?
Unpacking Elementary School Absences in MMSD, presented by Eric Grodsky

Rethinking Cooperation and Co-Ownership –
Introducing MEP's Approach to Middle School Attendance Research, presented by Katie Eklund

Interactive Discussion

6:30-7:00 pm

Reception and Informal Conversations

ABOUT THE PRESENTERS



Katie Eklund is an Assistant Professor in the School Psychology Program and Co-Director of MEP. Prior to entering academia, Eklund worked in public education for 10 years as a school administrator, school psychologist, and social worker. She is currently a Nationally Certified School

Psychologist and licensed Psychologist. Eklund's research focuses on school mental health, including early identification and intervention for childhood behavioral and emotional concerns, school climate, and school safety.



Beth Graue, a former kindergarten teacher, is Sorenson Professor of Early Childhood Education in the Department of Curriculum & Instruction. The director of the Center for Research on Early Childhood Education (CRECE) at WCER, Graue received her PhD in

Research and Evaluation Methodologies from the University of Colorado Boulder. Graue has studied readiness, kindergarten, home school relations, culturally responsive early math, preK policy enactment, and the infusion of mindfulness practices into teaching.



Eric Grodsky is a Professor of Sociology and Educational Policy Studies and Co-Director of MEP. Grodsky has researched testing in American secondary education, inequality in entry to and completion of college, the role of graduate and professional education in producing

and maintaining social inequality, the relationship between education and health, and MEP's ongoing 4-year-old and 5-year-old kindergarten studies.



Katie Ostrander is a 5th year doctoral candidate studying Educational Psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Katie is currently completing her internship in School Psychology in the Madison Metropolitan School District. In graduate school, Katie has focused

her studies on understanding how early childhood education experiences affect social-emotional and academic outcomes of low-income students



Culleen Witthuhn is the MMSD Director of Early Education. She has 19 years of urban education experience. She earned an undergraduate degree in education from Carroll University, a Masters in Educational Leadership, and a Director of Special Education/

Pupil Service License from Cardinal Stritch University. Prior to working with MMSD, Culleen worked with the Racine Unified School District dedicating 10 years to teaching elementary and middle school and serving 8 years as a Director of Early Learning and Directing Principal.



Beth Vaade is the Innovation Team Project Manager for MMSD and Co-Director of MEP. Vaade's work for MMSD focuses on building the skills, experience, and capacity of MMSD staff to engage in innovation, design thinking, and creative problem solving. She previously worked in the

Research & Program Evaluation Office for MMSD, focusing on major qualitative and mixed methods research and evaluation projects, as well as strategic planning, project management, and external research relationships.



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