



INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH
College of Business and Public Policy
3211 Providence Drive • Anchorage, Alaska 99508-4614

CENTER FOR ALASKA EDUCATION POLICY RESEARCH

Mission, Core Values and First Year Work Plan

In summer 2010, the Institute of Social and Economic Research was awarded University of Alaska Foundation funding to start the Center for Alaska Education Policy Research. This document lays out the center's mission and core values, and provides an overview of the center's operations in its start-up year.

MISSION

The Center for Alaska Education Policy Research enhances decision-making by policymakers, education professionals, and the public through collaborative, interdisciplinary research, analysis, and dissemination. The center conducts non-partisan research on policy issues around educational access, equity and excellence in the Alaska context, across early childhood, primary and secondary, higher and adult education.

CORE VALUES

- The center supports objective, non-partisan, rigorous research
- The center's work is conducted in partnership and collaboration with faculty from across the university system, key stakeholders and policymakers
- The center promotes community engagement by connecting researchers with policymakers and stakeholders, and by making research accessible to multiple audiences

WHAT IS EDUCATION POLICY RESEARCH?

Education policy research is a broad and evolving field of study. There are a number of topic areas and research approaches that fall under this moniker, from economic studies, including cost-benefit or "production function" research to organizational studies, looking at how policies are implemented to evaluation studies, assessing the impact and outcomes of policies. Education policy research can address how policies are developed and the relationship of politics to policies or policies to practice. It also can inform policymaking, answering questions decision-makers have about what is currently happening, why it is happening, and what might be needed to address a particular challenge.

The center will conduct research that both informs policymaking and illuminates emerging policy issues. We aim to meet the needs of state and local education policymakers for up-to-date information on issues of concern and also support researchers, educators and students as they examine questions around policy.

While we are not focused on educational practice, we recognize that research on policy often intersects with and should be informed by research on practice. Therefore we will collaborate with deans, faculty, researchers and educators in Alaska and outside the state who have expertise in areas of practice that complement the center's research focus. We will draw on a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds and methodological skills from center staff, researchers at the Institute of Social and Economic Research and across the University of Alaska, and from collaborators outside the University.

CENTER ACTIVITIES

To support and conduct education policy research in Alaska in several ways, CAEPR will:

- 1) continue current research on policy issues including educator supply and demand, indigenous education policy and school finance. This work will be done in collaboration with researchers around the state, as well as from outside Alaska, including those at Education Northwest and the new National Education Policy Center at the University of Colorado.
- 2) provide mini-grant funding for education policy research to University of Alaska faculty around the state.
- 3) provide "rapid response" funding for researchers to respond to requests from legislators and state policymakers.
- 4) sponsor undergraduate researchers to assist with research projects through the Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship at UAA, as well as a summer research intern through the First Alaskans Institute summer internship program.
- 5) provide proposal development assistance to faculty across the University of Alaska system interested in obtaining external funding for education policy research.

Eventually, we hope to sponsor pre- and post-doctoral researchers, and expand ways in which we build capacity for education policy research across Alaska.

INITIAL RESEARCH AGENDA

The center will build on current and recent education policy research at University of Alaska Anchorage's (UAA) Institute of Social and Economic Research. The areas of study include (but are not limited to) the following:

Workforce issues

Research in this area addresses both workforce preparation and educator preparation issues, such as educator supply, demand, retention and compensation, and career and technical education at the K-12 and post-secondary level.

Indigenous and rural education policy

Studies on current policies and alternatives for providing education in rural and remote areas of Alaska are included in this topic area as well as research on current and past boarding schools and education of indigenous students.

P-16 issues

Topics under this broad area include college and workforce preparedness, school finance, higher education financial aid models, dual credit and college bridging programs.

Early Childhood Education. Research might explore different approaches to providing ECE and their outcomes, such as whether it should be compulsory or voluntary; and whether providers should be public, private or a mix of public and private entities.

YEAR 1 WORKPLAN

Fall 2010

- Continue ongoing education policy research
- Meet with key stakeholders to develop priorities for education policy research in Alaska
- Begin UAA/UA Regents approval process to establish a center
- Award mini-grants to faculty across the UA system to conduct education policy research
- Identify potential internal and external funding sources – work with the UAA Development Office, UA Statewide Corporate & Foundation Relations, and the UAA Planning and Budget Advisory Council (PBAC) process
- Develop regional education policy research collaborative with Education Northwest

Spring 2011

- Continue ongoing education policy research projects
- Meet with education policy researchers in several state and national research institutes to discuss how they structure their organizations and work
- Meet with state legislators and other policymakers to discuss their research needs
- Continue discussions with Development, potential funders about support for the center; apply for external grants and foundation support
- Present research at American Educational Research Association annual meeting and meet with education policy researchers

UA DEANS OF EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE

The University of Alaska Deans of Education will serve as a center steering committee. The deans will ensure that CAEPR is effectively building education policy research capacity across the university and that CAEPR research is coordinated with and supportive of research conducted in the schools and colleges of education. The deans will also advise on how CAEPR can best meet its goals of serving the needs of the state and implementing a broad research agenda of value to a diverse constituency.

CAEPR POLICY ADVISORY BOARD

CAEPR will create an Advisory Board to help determine research priorities for the center, identify potential projects and partners, and participate in awarding faculty mini-grants. Advisory board members will include the Alaska Commissioner of Education, a representative of the First Alaskans Institute, the executive director of the Alaska Association of School Administrators, a representative of the University of Alaska Statewide Administration, the chairs of the Education Standing Committees of the Alaska State Legislature, the UA liaison to the Alaska Department of Education and Rural Development, one rural and one urban school or district administrator, indigenous educators, and other stakeholders as appropriate.

PERSONNEL

CAEPR Co-Principal Investigators are Dr. Diane Hirshberg, Associate Professor of Education Policy, and Alexandra Hill, Research Associate. Dr. Hirshberg has 15 years of research experience on education, public policy and equity issues. Her recent work focuses on indigenous education in Alaska, including studies of boarding school experiences of Native students and the educational lives of Alaska Native students at UAA, as well as on school change issues. She is an evaluator for several federal education grants in Alaska including the internal evaluation of the Alaska Educational Innovations Network, and the external evaluation of the Alaska Pacific University Education Innovations Grant. She received her PhD in Education from UCLA, an MPA from Columbia University, and a BA from UC Berkeley.

Alexandra Hill is a Research Associate at ISER with 20 years experience researching a variety of public policy issues and 10 years of focusing on education policy issues and grant evaluation. She specializes in quantitative analyses of large datasets. She has studied issues of teacher recruitment and retention, education finance, and has worked on the internal evaluation of the Alaska Educational Innovations Network, and external evaluations of the Alaska Partnership for Teacher Enhancement, Alaska Network for Understanding American History, Teaching American History Project Clio II, Rural Educator Preparation Partnership, Alaska PT3 Consortium, and PT3 in Rural Alaska projects. Ms. Hill has a Master in Public Affairs from Princeton University, an MS in Business Administration from Boston University, and a BA in Engineering Science from Dartmouth College.

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CENTER FOR ALASKA EDUCATION POLICY RESEARCH (CAEPR)

Four-Year Strategic Plan

2010-2014

The Center for Alaska Education Policy Research (CAEPR) was created with seed funding from the University of Alaska Foundation, which identified a goal of addressing “the most important educational policy issues facing Alaska.” The Center’s mission and core values are as follows:

FOUR YEAR PLAN

The following describes the goals, measures of success and strategies for achieving the goals

Goal 1) CAEPR will contribute to improving education policy decision making in Alaska by providing quality research on Alaska education policy issues of concern to key policymakers at the national, state and district level

Measures

1. CAEPR researchers work with policymakers and stakeholders to identify and research critical issues in Alaska education policy.
2. CAEPR research is cited regularly by Alaska policymakers, education researchers and the media.
3. CAEPR researchers receive and respond to requests from policymakers from the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, the Alaska State Legislature, and other stakeholders around the state.

Strategies:

1. CAEPR has an active research dissemination program electronically and in hard copy. Products include working papers, research digests and summaries and newsletters.
2. CAEPR has a web presence that informs Alaska education policymaking via summaries of research from CAEPR, other Alaska researchers, and national scholars, links to key information sources, and analyses of emerging issues.
3. CAEPR hosts an annual meeting for Alaska education policymakers, educators and researchers that includes presentations on current education policy research and issues
4. CAEPR staff regularly brief state and local education policymakers on current research

Goal 2) CAEPR will build the capacity of faculty, researchers, and students to conduct education policy research in Alaska

Measures

1. CAEPR researchers collaborate regularly with faculty, students and researchers across the University of Alaska system on education policy research.
2. CAEPR supports faculty across the UA system in obtaining external funding and contracts for education policy research
3. CAEPR researchers and affiliate faculty produce peer-reviewed publications and conference presentations on a regular basis.
4. CAEPR regularly hosts pre- and post-doctoral researchers, undergraduate interns, and visiting scholars.
5. CAEPR researchers collaborate regularly with researchers and interns at First Alaskans Institute/Alaska Native Policy Center.

Strategies:

1. CAEPR staff will partner with faculty across the UA system on Alaska education policy research projects.
2. CAEPR will provide administrative support to UA faculty in designing their own policy research projects, developing proposals for funding and disseminating the findings of their research
3. CAEPR will coordinate with UA research and sponsored projects offices and campus faculty development centers to identify and support professional development opportunities on policy research and proposal writing.
4. CAEPR will support undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral researchers as well as visiting scholars.
5. CAEPR will work with doctoral programs across Alaska to support students' education policy research through serving on committees, offering special topics courses and seminars, and involving students in center policy research.
6. CAEPR will support internships for indigenous students in collaboration with the First Alaskans Institute and partner with researchers at the Alaska Native Policy Center on projects of mutual interest.

Goal 3) CAEPR is financially stable and sustainable

Measures

1. CAEPR has hard funding to support ongoing research on key Alaska education policy issues, such as educator supply and demand.
2. CAEPR has long-term seed funding for key staff positions, including at least half of the salary of the director and senior research associate, and a half time staff person to provide proposal support and administrative/fiscal management, as well as for key center activities.
3. CAEPR receives financial support from a variety of sources including the Alaska State Legislature, education organizations around the state, and competitive federal, state, and private foundation grants.

Strategies:

1. CAEPR works with the UAA Development Office, UA Statewide Corporate & Foundation Relations, and the UAA Planning and Budget Advisory Council (PBAC) process to identify potential private foundation sources of support for the center.
2. CAEPR produces and disseminates research that receives recognition and develops a constituency for this work
3. CAEPR staffers develop relationships with legislators, Alaska Department of Education and Early Development and Alaska State Board of Education leadership, and other key education leaders to foster support for state funding.
4. CAEPR collaborates with nationally recognized education research organizations such as Education Northwest and the National Education Policy Center on research and dissemination to develop multi-state projects

Goal 4) Develop and implement an ongoing research program that addresses key issues of Alaska education policy

Measures

1. By the end of year three, CAEPR staff will develop a 5-year research plan addressing the most important issues in Alaska education policy.
2. By the end of year three, CAEPR staff will have revised the center strategic plan.

Strategies:

1. CAEPR staff will work with education stakeholders and policy makers across Alaska to set the research agenda and priorities.
2. CAEPR staff will solicit comments and suggestions on the draft research agenda and the revised strategic plan from stakeholders.
3. CAEPR will recruit and maintain an advisory board that represents the diversity of Alaska's education stakeholders, including rural and urban educators and administrators, local and state education policymakers, indigenous educators and leaders, and key university faculty and administrators.
4. The CAEPR research agenda will recognize and reflect the unique education policy issues in Alaska around indigenous cultures and communities as well as the need for a rigorous P-16 education that prepares Alaskans to compete and thrive in the world economy.

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CENTER FOR ALASKA EDUCATION POLICY RESEARCH (CAEPR) **Year 1 (FY 2011) and Year2 (FY 2012) Budget and Budget Narrative**

<u>CAEPR BUDGET Year 1 (FY 2011) & Year 4 (FY 2015)</u>			
<u>Program Activity</u>	<u>Account Description</u>	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>
Center Activities	Building the Center (Year 1) & Center Administration (Year 2)	\$ 41,500	\$ 25,500
	Connecting with Policy Makers	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000
	UA Faculty Mini-grants	\$ 60,000	\$ 65,000
	Interns	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000
	Undergraduate Scholars	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
	Proposal Support	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000
	Rapid Response	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
Education Workforce Issues	Supply & Demand & SB241 Career and Technical Education	\$ 35,000	\$ 45,000
Indigenous and Rural Issues	Rural Education Options	\$ 26,500	\$ 26,500
P16 issues	Education Finance PK-16 Articulation Early Childhood	\$ 45,000	\$ 56,000
Total		\$ 250,000	\$ 250,000

Overview of Year 1 and Year 2

The year 1 CAEPR budget reflects the current fiscal spending plan, while the year 2 budget represents the goal growing the research agenda and moving toward the end goal of a center that supports a .6FTE director, a senior researcher with at least 40% of her time on CAEPR projects, administrative support, and funding for faculty liaisons across the UA system, visiting scholars, interns, and other researchers, depending on project needs.

Budget Narrative: CAEPR Year 1 (FY 2011)

Center Activities: Creating and implementing the center's administrative structure; seeing the center through the UAA and UA Statewide administrative approval process; initiating the advisory board; proposal writing to procure on-going funding; expanding the capacity of the University of Alaska to conduct education policy research; connecting with policy makers through disseminating relevant policy research; collaborating with regional and national education policy organizations, and funding faculty and staff to respond to policymaker questions on education policy topics.

Workforce issues: Assisting with the creation of the University's report to the legislature mandated under SB241; updating ISER's Supply and Demand report; developing broader studies both of the education workforce and of workforce preparation in general, and of career and technical education at K-12 and higher education levels.

Indigenous and Rural Issues: Research, write and present papers on indigenous and rural education options in Alaska, the circumpolar north, and elsewhere; disseminate and coordinate with other researchers. Develop collaborations with researchers at national and international meetings.

P-16 Issues: Develop research agenda around Alaska education finance issues, P-16 articulation, career and technical education and early childhood education.

Budget Narrative: CAEPR Year 2 (FY 2012)

Center Activities: Continue to work with the advisory board; develop faculty liaisons at each of the three UA schools/colleges of Education; proposal writing to procure on-going funding; expanding the capacity of the University of Alaska to conduct education policy research; connecting with policy makers through disseminating relevant policy research; collaborating with regional and national education policy organizations, and funding faculty and staff to respond to questions on education policy topics.

Workforce issues: Continue workforce research, including assisting with the creation of the University's report to the legislature mandated under SB241; updating ISER's Supply and Demand report; responding to state needs for research around workforce preparation in general, and of career and technical education at K-12 and higher education levels. Prepare proposals and secure grants around CTE and workforce development.

Indigenous and Rural Issues: Prepare proposals and secure research grants in this area; research, write and present papers on indigenous and rural education options in Alaska, the circumpolar north, and elsewhere; disseminate and coordinate with other researchers. Develop collaborations with researchers at national and international meetings.

P-16 Issues: Build on previous research around Alaska education finance issues, higher education financial aid models and P-16 articulation. Prepare proposals and secure grants to continue this research.