The PRIncipal Investigator

Peabody Research Institute at Vanderbilt University

Issue 3 Spr 2015

Join Us for Our Upcoming Mini-Conference

Problematic Behavior in Schools and What to Do About It

The Peabody Research Institute is hosting its annual mini-conference on April 2, 2015. This year’s conference features three of the leading educational research scholars in the field of school behavior, Dr. Denise Gottfredson, Dr. Joe Durlak, and Dr. Sandra Graham.

The speakers’ presentations will each focus on a unique aspect of problem school behaviors. Dr. Graham’s talk on peer victimization will highlight how the racial context of schools influences the ways in which peers interact. Dr. Gottfredson’s talk will focus on the broader aspects of school climate, such as teacher and administrator engagement and understanding of children’s behaviors in the school context. Dr. Durlak’s presentation will highlight different programs shown to improve behavioral competencies in students and the strategies used in those programs to enact change.

Each of these scholars has had a significant and lasting impact on educational research and we are honored that they will be joining us for what is sure to be an exciting event. After the presentations, the speakers will field the audience’s questions. Last year’s Q&A session was one of the highlights of the mini-conference. Immediately following the presentations and Q&A session, we will host a reception to honor our guests.

This event is free and open to the public. Last year over 200 people attended and we anticipate over 250 participants this year. No RSVP is necessary, but anyone wishing to bring a large group is encouraged to email the organizers.

Mini-Conference Details:

When: Thursday, April 2, 2015
2-4 with the reception to follow from 4-5

Where: The Wyatt Center Rotunda
1930 South Drive, Nashville, TN
(located on the Peabody Campus at Vanderbilt University)

For more information or to contact the organizers, please visit our website: http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/research/pri/miniconference.php
PRI PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

PRI is currently conducting over 20 research projects. To see a full list of projects, please visit our website: http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/research/pri/index.php

Pre-K ‘best practices’ – MNPS and PRI Collaborative

The Metropolitan Nashville Public School System (MNPS) is embarking on a mission to improve the quality of its pre-kindergarten programs. In January 2014, the Tennessean reported “Every Nashville 4-year-old whose parents covet prekindergarten would have a seat by 2018 under a plan [by] Metro Director of Schools Jesse Register...Nashville’s superintendent backs a phased approach to expand prekindergarten locally over the next three or four years.”

Stemming from MNPS’ own internal evaluation as well as results from the statewide evaluation of TN-VPK conducted by the Peabody Research Institute, MNPS created three pre-k “hubs” or model early learning centers that began in the 2014-15 school year. The goal of these hubs is two-fold: (1) MNPS is partnering with PRI researchers to create a data-driven change process by which potential markers of classroom quality that are related to improved child outcomes are identified; and (2) MNPS hopes the data collected through the partnership will lead to a model that can be disseminated and implemented by all pre-k teachers district-wide to improve pre-k as a whole.

Data collection on this project began in Fall 2014, with the assessment of 446 students from 27 classrooms. Each classroom is being observed 3 times and children will be assessed again at the end of the school year. The second round of classroom observations is currently underway. An innovative system created by Deanna Meador and Kim Nesbitt allows data from assessments and observations to be used to support goal-planning sessions for the participating teachers and administrators as they work towards a model program.

Exploring the Predictors of Adverse Youth Outcomes: Meta-Analysis of Longitudinal Research

Why do certain students exhibit antisocial behavior? What drives some students to substance abuse? And what is behind student failure in school? Antisocial behavior, school failure, and substance abuse are complicated and overlapping problems with long-term consequences. To effectively target programs and interventions, we need to identify and understand the developmental warning signs of these behaviors. Knowledge of these warning signs is necessary to identify children in need of services, and to design prevention programs aimed at addressing these adverse outcomes.

Sandra Jo Wilson, Associate Director of the Peabody Research Institute and Research Assistant Professor for the Department of Special Education is using advanced meta-analysis techniques, in the “Predictors” project to produce a synthesis of findings from all available longitudinal studies that report relationships between antecedent variables and antisocial behavior, school, and substance use outcomes.

This project is supported by funding from the Institute for Education Sciences, National Institute of Mental Health, National Institute on Child Health and Human Development, National Institute on Drug Abuse, and the William T. Grant Foundation.


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PRI CONFERENCE PAPERS from 2014


**WORKING AT PRI**

**Interested in becoming a part of the PRI team?**

We frequently have part-time coding positions on our meta-analysis projects as well as assessor/observer positions on our field-based studies.

Visit our current openings page for more information:

[http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/research/pri/current_openings.php](http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/research/pri/current_openings.php)

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For more information, click here:


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**RECENT NEWS**

- Tennessee was awarded a $70M Pre-K Expansion Grant and PRI will conduct the evaluation component.
- PRI’s Dale Farran received the Antonio M. and Anita S. Gotto Endowed Chair in Teaching and Learning.
- PRI certified its first-ever group of Juvenile Justice SPEP trainers in PA.
- PRI staff members traveled to Portugal to train a group of researchers on classroom observation measures for an upcoming trans-cultural research project on participation and quality in inclusive preschool settings.
- PRI’s Emily Tanner-Smith was awarded the American Sociological Society’s Junior Scholar Award.

**For more information visit our News Feed:**