

Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement

Bridging Research to Practice Gaps to Improve Student Outcomes



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Agenda

1. Provide information about CAREI and our mission to collaborate in the areas of research, evaluation, evidence based practices, and assessment.
2. Big Ideas Regarding Evidence Based Practices
3. Challenges with Implementing Evidence Based Programs, Practices, and Policies



Center for
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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Quick Introduction to CAREI

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Who We Are: CAREI is a “soft money” research center that serves as the link between research and practice in school districts and other agencies interested in applied research. We have expertise in research, evaluation, assessment, and improvement science.

What We Do: We partner with school districts and other agencies to bring the latest information on cutting-edge research with a focus on implementation of evidence based practices and programs, data-based decision-making and evaluating the impact of system change.

How We Are Funded: We are funded through grants, external sales projects with school districts and non-profits, and technical assistance projects.

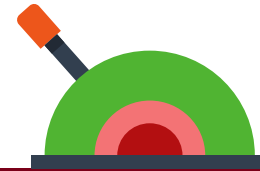
Our Mission

Improve the quality of education for all learners, thereby society as a whole

Partnerships to:

- ✓ Stay up-to-date on evidence-based practices
- ✓ Implement programs and practices with fidelity
- ✓ Evaluate the impact of programs and practices (formative and summative)
- ✓ Improve outcomes with an emphasis on closing achievement gaps
- ✓ Help school districts “get better at getting better” through continuous improvement.

Our vision is to be the premier network hub that builds educator's data-based decision-making capacity through high quality technical assistance, professional learning, program evaluation, and research in education



Research

- Testing hypothesis using rigorous methods
- Random Control Studies
- Quasi-Experimental
- Correlational

Professional Learning

- Multi Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Framework
- Evidence Based Practices
- Networked Improvement Communities
- Data Literacy

Technical Assistance

- Virtual or Onsite Coaching on Evidence Based Practices
- Implementation Planning
- Data Analysis
- Survey Development

Program Evaluation

- Is What We are Doing better, worse, or the same as before?
- How can implementation be improved?
- Are potential solutions being implemented with fidelity?
- Are we closing the gap fast enough?
- Are we leveraging our resources in an effective manner?

Every Student Succeeds Act: Big Idea

Equitably Design Education Systems to Ensure that Students
Who have Historically been Underserved Receive an
Education that Prepares Them for
21st Century Demands.

ESSA Key Components

High-Quality Curriculum & Assessment

- ✓ Higher-Order Thinking
- ✓ Resources for PD

Evidence-Based Instruction

- ✓ Engaging
- ✓ Safe
- ✓ Culture of Collaboration



Multiple Measures to Assess Schools

- ✓ Dashboard of indicators
- ✓ Beyond test scores and graduation

Resource Equity

- ✓ Address resource inequities
- ✓ Incentives for strategies linked to student needs



Put Simply

What Works ?
For Whom ? &
Under What Set of
Conditions ?

So, What is Evidence-Based (in Law) ?

Unpacking Definition of “Evidenced-Based” in ESS

Strong

- At Least 1 Well Designed & Well Implemented **Quasi-Experimental Study** (i.e.,

Medium

- At Least 1 Well Designed & Well Implemented **Quasi-Experimental Study** (i.e., Matched).

Promising

- At Least 1 Well Designed & Well Implemented **Correlational Study** With Statistical Controls for Selection Bias.

But That's Just
the 1st Decision

Find the
Overlap

Best Available
Research
Evidence

Decision to Select

Characteristics,
Geography,
Values,
Preferences

Resources, inc.
Practitioner
Expertise

Classroom &
Organizational
Context



ESSA as a Road Map to Closing the Achievement Gap

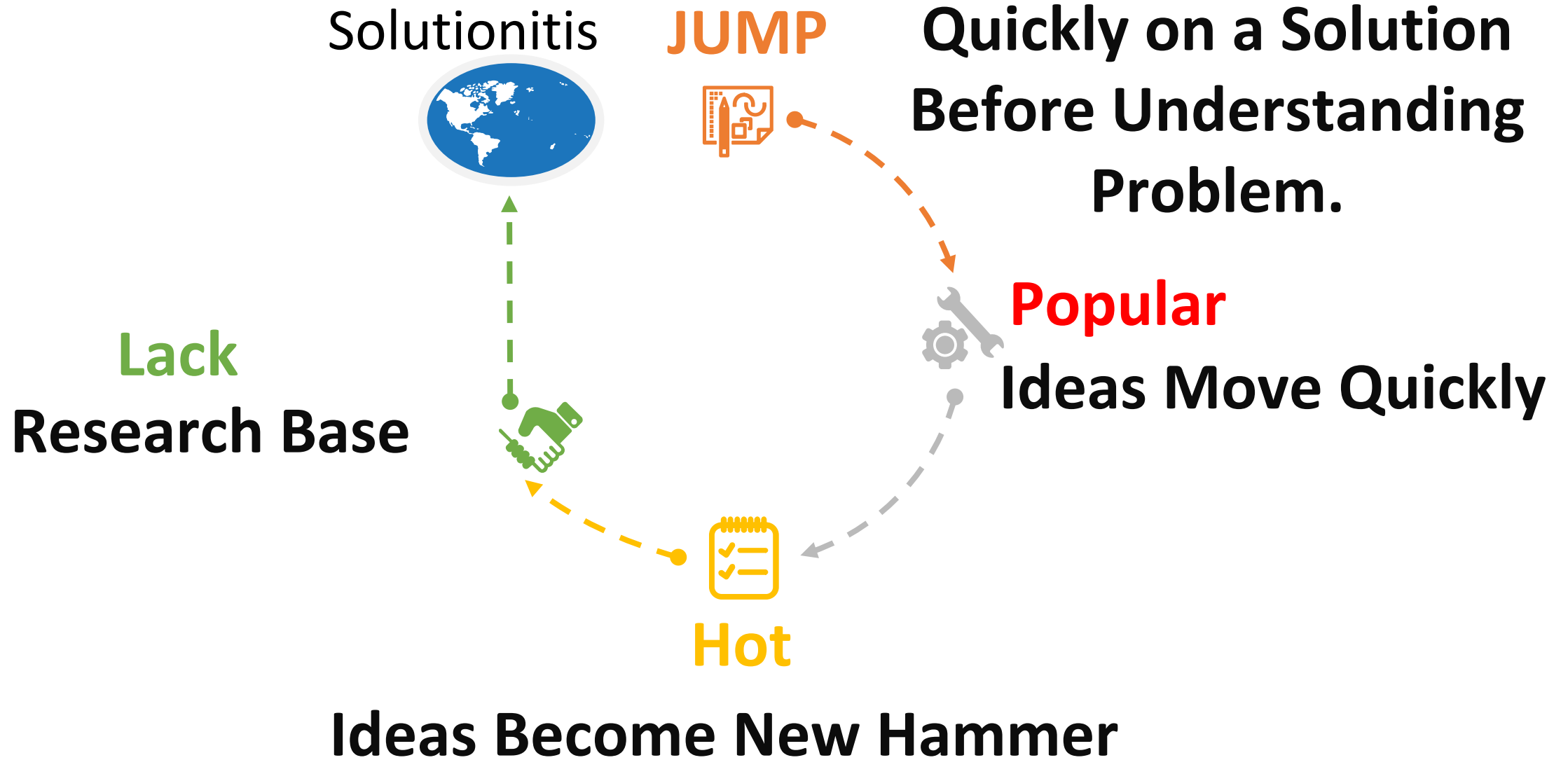
What Drives Us Down the Road Is Our Ability to:

- Use Data to Identify Student Needs,
- Implement Evidence-Based Instruction and Interventions
- Evaluate the Impact

Challenges and Road Blocks

Implementing and Evaluating Evidence Based Practices

Solutionitis as a Fundamental Problem



Challenges with Implementing Evidence Based

- Research to Practice Gap
- It's Hard to Give Up What is Done Well, Even If it is No Longer Relevant.
- Evaluating the impact of what we do

Program Evaluation: How Often Does It Happen?

- 51% of administrators in MN rated their capacity to evaluate policies and programs as poor.
- High-quality program evaluation is infrequent due to :
 - Lack of time (78%)
 - Inadequate staffing/expertise (63%)
 - Cost (53%)

CAREI Statewide Needs Assessment: <https://www.cehd.umn.edu/carei/>

Other Road Blocks

Key Findings:

- Respondents Believe Quality Data Can Improve Educational Decisions.
- 70% of Respondents Indicated Their Capacity to Effectively Use Data to Guide Educational Decisions was **Fair to Poor**.
- Schools are Data Rich but Information **Poor**.
- We Need to Understand How to Use Data for Various Decisions Re:Student Outcomes (Data Literacy).

CAREI Statewide Needs Assessment (2015): <https://www.cehd.umn.edu/carei/>

Policy Recommendations

- All grants should require allocating a portion of grant funding to evaluation of programs, practices, policies
- Evaluators should be trained in research methodology, statistics, and measurement (Master's or PhD)
- Require a Logic Model with clearly defined research or evaluation questions
- Require a detailed implementation plan (timeline, data, analysis of outcomes) and dissemination plan
- Require an evaluation of fidelity of implementation

Questions?

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