



# Moneyball for Education

## Using Data, Evidence, and Evaluation to Improve Federal Education Policy



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### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

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| <b>1. Develop Solid, Trusted Metrics to Improve Federal Programs</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Institute for Education Sciences (IES) should redirect a portion of existing research and development funds to help identify a broad set of indicators that lead to improved student outcomes, and refine them over time.</li><li>• The Department of Education (ED) should provide these indicators to state and local recipients of federal funds as options for data collection.</li><li>• The National Center on Education Statistics (NCES) should, as part of its annual data collection, collect data on a range of these indicators from a sample of states and school districts, and make the results public.</li></ul>   |
| <b>2. Devote a Portion of Funds to Evaluating Programs and to Building States' and Local Decision Makers' Capacity to Learn What Works</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ED should set aside a small but significant percentage of all program funds for performing high-quality program evaluations, in partnership with IES.</li><li>• ED and IES should do more to make public and widely disseminate the results of evaluations in a format that is useful to educators and policymakers.</li><li>• ED should require grantees participating in evaluations to explain how they will use the results for continuous improvement, as appropriate.</li><li>• ED and IES should enhance their production of a broader set of evaluative information, including rapid-cycle evaluations, quick data collections, implementation guides, step-by-step practice guides, and webinars.</li><li>• Congress should identify other budget savings opportunities and appropriate \$150 million to support evidence-based innovation through hubs that can aid state and local entities that are testing promising ideas, help evaluate and improve them over time, and boost states' and school districts' capacity to engage in evidence-based improvement.</li></ul> |
| <b>3. Ensure the Use of a Trusted Entity and Process in Program Evaluation</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Congress should direct IES to set forth transparent and benchmarked standards, norms, and routines to guide the evaluation of future ED grant programs or competitions. This should include questions about reviewer qualifications and standards of evidence.</li></ul>   |

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| <b>4. Produce Meaningful Spending Data that Supports Cost-Benefit Analysis</b>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Council of Chief State School Officers and the Council of the Great City Schools should extend their ongoing efforts by convening a task force to devise rules for common cost accounting and common productivity indicators that allow for determining the costs and benefits of school expenditures.</li><li>• ED should establish a pilot project wherein a handful of states and school districts agree to report more accurate cost-benefit data without having to fear adverse accounting procedures to field test the new measures.</li><li>• Once new cost-accounting measures are approved, NCES and the Office of Civil Rights should include them in their regular data collections and make such data publicly available.</li><li>• Once approved and tested, the Office of Management and Budget should ask ED to justify increases in its grant programs through use of a cost-benefit analysis.</li></ul>  |
| <b>5. Make Education Programs More Evidence Based</b>  | <p><i>For Competitive Programs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ED should apply a tiered-evidence framework to its major competitive grant programs, providing greater funds to those grantees with greater evidence of effectiveness, while providing lesser funds to promising ideas with lesser but sufficient evidence of effectiveness and requiring evaluations to build evidence.</li><li>• In making competitive grants, ED should award bonus points to grantees with greater evidence of effectiveness.</li><li>• ED should provide or support technical assistance to grantees that lack the capacity to compete for traditional competitive grants.</li></ul> <p><i>For Formula Programs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Congress should require recipients of large formula grants to dedicate a portion of their funds to proven, evidence-based activities or to demonstrate in some way that their use of funds is based on evidence.</li><li>• Congress should tie increases in formula dollars to recipients demonstrating that funds will be used for evidence-based activities.</li><li>• Congress should find ways to direct more formula funds toward grantees with a track record of success.</li></ul> |
| <b>6. Explore Innovative Approaches to Boosting Program Outcomes and Performance</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ED should pilot a performance-based model in a competitive grant that makes subsequent grant payments when grantees achieve agreed-upon outcomes. Similarly, states that run grant competitions with federal funds, such as 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, could do the same.</li><li>• Congress should authorize the use of federal funds for Pay for Success initiatives. Where such authority exists, ED should clarify that federal funds can be used in this way.</li></ul>   |
| <b>7. Allow Pilot Projects that Emphasize Data-Driven, Evidence-Based Continuous Improvement</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Congress should authorize pilot projects, under existing programs, that allow grantees greater flexibility in use of funds and reporting in exchange for setting clear outcomes-based goals, using data to track progress, and evaluating improvement over time.</li></ul>  |