

2014-2015 REPORT

Nebraska Center for Research on
Children, Youth, Families & Schools

University of Nebraska–Lincoln



EXPANDING HORIZONS

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Susan M. Sheridan, PhD

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Educational Psychology

Director, Nebraska Center for Research
on Children, Youth, Families & Schools

Director, National Center for Research
on Rural Education

Message from the Director

As we identify new challenges and opportunities on the horizon of education, the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools has strengthened the breadth of its research commitment—from birth to career readiness, in rural and urban areas, and across interdisciplinary research interests.

With the close collaboration of our many partners in research, policy and practice, we've sustained and expanded our vision to impact lives across the education spectrum.

We've advanced early childhood initiatives, using evidence-based strategies to assist classroom instruction and build family-school partnerships. We've worked to provide students with opportunities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics—encouraging curiosity while preparing them for tomorrow's workforce. And we've increased our efforts to assist researchers at all stages of their career, through student collaboration, educational outreach and comprehensive grant support.

Moving forward, we remain committed to expanding the reach of interdisciplinary research and translating it to practice. This is the vision that challenges and motivates us. This is the vision that pulls our gaze to the horizon and beyond, because our collective research capacity stretches just as far.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan M. Sheridan".

Susan M. Sheridan



Our Mission

To advance the conduct of high-quality, interdisciplinary research that promotes the intellectual, behavioral and social-emotional development and functioning of individuals across educational, familial and community contexts. Central to this is enhancing our understanding of how these complex systems work dynamically to support the future of our nation.

About CYFS

In partnership with community stakeholders, we create the context for researchers to establish reliable findings; inform and influence the knowledge base; translate findings into evidence-based practices; and provide scientifically grounded education, leadership and outreach. The CYFS infrastructure supports the establishment of prevailing initiatives that shape the progress of children, youth, families and schools.



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CYFS Impacts at a Glance

951

PK-12 EDUCATORS

Hundreds of PK-12 educators have taken part in CYFS projects ranging from professional development and family-school partnership initiatives to student-centered intervention and prevention programs.

41,872

CHILDREN & ADOLESCENTS

More than 41,800 children and adolescents have participated in the center's research across Nebraska, the Midwest and the United States. These programs have aimed to enhance school readiness, reading skills, science literacy, social-emotional maturity and other essential developmental capacities.

433

PK-12 SCHOOLS

More than 430 PK-12 schools in rural, suburban and urban districts have contributed to CYFS research. These schools have represented a wide range of socioeconomic and demographic populations, reflected both in student composition and available resources.



= 10 rural schools

266 RURAL SCHOOLS

We've partnered with more than 260 rural schools across Nebraska, the Midwest and the United States.

248

STUDENT AFFILIATES

More than 240 UNL graduate and undergraduate students have affiliated themselves with CYFS since the center's inception in 2004.

62 94 134

2004 2009 2015

FACULTY AFFILIATES

The number of University of Nebraska faculty affiliated with CYFS has expanded steadily throughout the center's history, as has the breadth of research interests represented by those scholars.

\$56,706,572

CYFS has received 151 research grants totaling more than \$56.7 million.

\$18.90

CYFS has earned \$18.90 in external funding for every \$1.00 invested via Program of Excellence funds.

43%

CYFS has received funding for approximately 43% of the grants it has submitted.

56.7 EXTERNAL

3.0 PoE

DOLLARS IN MILLIONS

Cumulative External Grant Dollars Relative to Program of Excellence (PoE) Support



National Center for Research on Rural Education

Across Nebraska's Great Plains, more than half of the state's schools are located in rural areas. Throughout the United States, more than 25 percent of schools are considered rural—and while their geography may differ, many of the perennial issues they face are widely shared.

With nearly \$10 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, the CYFS-housed National Center for Research on Rural Education (R²Ed) was established in June 2009 to advance a scientific foundation for education in rural settings. To accomplish this comprehensive goal, the center created a national infrastructure to spur and share rural research, and tested new strategies to aid classroom instruction and student learning.

A wide network of collaborators has been central to R²Ed's success, including visiting professors, postdoctoral fellows, predoctoral research assistants, and rural administrators, teachers and parents. To bring these diverse stakeholders together, R²Ed hosted the 2013 National Conference on Rural Education. The conference fostered research dialogue on the interrelated aspects of rural student performance, including family engagement, teaching and the school environment. Aptly named *Connect-Inform-Advance*, the event epitomized the center's outreach goals and enduring impact.

This impact is also reflected in a series of R²Ed research studies, which explore effective strategies for rural teacher professional development and family-school partnerships. These studies have expanded the national research base for rural education. They've helped educators deliver innovative instruction in science and reading, using distance technology to reach rural classrooms. And by extending a research-based platform, they've leveraged the power of rural communities to shape future generations.



For more information on the National Center for Research on Rural Education, please visit:
r2ed.unl.edu

Teachers Speak

From the Appalachian Mountains to the Pacific Northwest, the inaugural study of the CYFS-housed National Center for Research on Rural Education began by surveying the national landscape of teacher professional development.

More than 500 rural and urban teachers from 43 states voiced their opinions through the Teachers Speak survey, which asked K-5 educators about their best professional development experience in one of four topics: reading, guided science inquiry, math instruction and the use of data to inform reading instruction.

With a team headed by CYFS researchers Todd Glover, Gwen Nugent and Tanya Ihlo, the survey identified variations in professional development between rural and non-rural contexts, as well as its impact on teachers' knowledge, perception and practice. It also assessed teachers' expertise in each topic area, allowing the research team to identify knowledge gaps and opportunities for additional training.

Across rural, urban and suburban contexts, the survey revealed more similarities than

differences. For instance, rural and non-rural teachers devoted nearly the same number of hours to their best professional development experience. The survey also revealed that teachers who spent more time on professional development demonstrated greater instructional content knowledge.

"Our findings are in line with other research on professional development, which shows that the more training teachers receive, the more likely the targeted outcomes will be impacted," Nugent said. "From rural to urban teachers throughout the nation, and across multiple content areas, our study has confirmed this finding and highlighted the value of investing in professional development."

Among all rural teachers surveyed, 25 percent reported that their best professional development experience included follow-up coaching. This is a promising finding, Nugent said, as it suggests that rural educators understand and recognize the importance of ongoing professional development. Another key finding suggests that teachers who receive training in specific topics and strategies perceive it to be more useful and are more

"This survey was integral to our understanding of nationwide preferences, opportunities and challenges in teacher professional development."



likely to implement it in the classroom—the ultimate aim of teacher professional development.

"This survey was integral to our understanding of nationwide preferences, opportunities and challenges in teacher professional development," Nugent said. "Its results guided our development of further studies through the National Center for Research on Rural Education by highlighting key areas to improve ongoing professional development for rural teachers."

Coaching Science Inquiry in Rural Schools

CYFS researchers have pioneered a study to provide rural science educators with instructional coaching, as technology ushers in a new frontier for professional development.

With a team led by Gwen Nugent, research professor, and Gina Kunz, research associate professor, Coaching Science Inquiry (CSI) in Rural Schools examined the impact of teacher professional development and technology-delivered coaching.

To begin the study, teachers received training in guided science inquiry—an approach that helps students understand underlying scientific concepts and principles. This initial training was followed by regular coaching sessions, as teachers video recorded their lessons and received feedback to enhance classroom instruction.

While the study specifically focused on coaching for guided science inquiry, one primary question prevailed: Does coaching improve teacher practice?

With data from 124 middle and high school science teachers across 109 rural Nebraska and Iowa schools, the team measured teacher and student knowledge, skills, self-efficacy and attitudes related to guided science inquiry. Across all outcomes, the results reflected a similar conclusion—there is power in repeated practice.

The study revealed an improvement in teacher knowledge, beliefs, confidence and practice

in implementing guided science inquiry. According to Nugent, the most striking result comes from coaching's effect on teacher instructional practice, which showed a significant increase over the control group.

"Teacher practice is the heart and soul of this project," Nugent said. "Teachers told us their coaching sessions had a powerful impact."



Gwen Nugent (center) with members of the CSI research team. Learn more at: csiruralschools.unl.edu

Project READERS

Using data to drive rural reading instruction, a CYFS team has developed new strategies to close the early childhood achievement gap.

Led by CYFS researchers Todd Glover and Tanya Ihlo, and in partnership with Lehigh University's Ed Shapiro, Project READERS (Response to Effective Assessment-Driven Early Reading Support) set out to study the effectiveness of teacher professional development and coaching provided through Web-based distance technology.

During the three-year project, rural teachers and school personnel received ongoing professional development in response-to-intervention. This approach uses data to identify students with reading difficulties, which then guides teachers as they select and implement research-based interventions.

Using distance technology, coaches helped rural teachers apply data to chart students' reading performance. They also worked directly with interventionists to assist in reading instruction, using a "bug in the ear" approach to deliver real-time suggestions through a headset and laptop.



"We received positive feedback from teachers on how helpful it was to have a coach walk them through the data-based decision-making process and apply it," Ihlo said. "Many of the teachers we worked with were excited about the growth their students made and planned to continue implementing these practices in their classrooms."

The study revealed improvements in self-efficacy and knowledge for teachers and interventionists, as they learned to apply data and deliver research-based reading instruction. These improvements also affected

student outcomes, most notably impacting third grade students.

"You rarely see dramatic results in third grade reading interventions, because students often receive interventions that are too advanced for their skill level, and that is not effective," said Michelle Howell Smith, project manager. "By using data to identify specific needs for students, teachers could instead deliver an appropriate intervention. Once they went back and addressed those deficits, students zoomed ahead in their reading progress."



Project READERS coaches and teachers use distance technology to guide classroom reading strategies.

Teachers and Parents as Partners

If it takes a village to raise a child, then rural communities with strong family-school partnerships may be among the better equipped.

A research team led by CYFS director Susan Sheridan has explored the impact of family-school partnerships for rural children across the Midwest. With Sheridan's model, known as Teachers and Parents as Partners (TAPP), parents and teachers work with a consultant to solve problems and implement strategies for students at home and school.

The four-year study followed rural teachers, parents and students who received TAPP as

compared to those who did not. Teachers and parents participating in TAPP used a four-step process to guide communication between home and school, and develop strategies to reduce disruptive behaviors and increase social and early academic skills.

In the classroom, students who received TAPP showed significant improvements in on-task behavior and appropriate interactions with peers and adults, as well as a decrease in learning problems. At home, these students had fewer temper tantrums, aggressive behaviors and instances of noncompliance, and showed improvements in communication and adaptive skills.

"We've seen rural teachers, administrators and community members going to great lengths to ensure the success of their students."

"We are finding that parents, teachers and students in smaller communities respond well to this intervention, which alleviates problems right away before they become entrenched," Witte said. "These results add to a growing evidence base that TAPP is an effective intervention for children across different settings, including rural areas."

Witte also worked as a TAPP consultant, witnessing firsthand the strength of family-school partnerships and rural relationships. She recalls one student whose good behavior was rewarded with sledding. One winter day, he earned his reward but had forgotten his sled at home—so the school principal drove to his house and brought it back.

"We've seen rural teachers, administrators and community members going to great lengths to ensure the success of their students," Witte said. "In all of our work, we learn so much from partnering with schools and communities."



Researchers also found significant improvements in the relationship quality between parents and teachers who participated in TAPP. According to Amanda Witte, project manager, the model is effective in providing a concrete structure and new ways to work together.

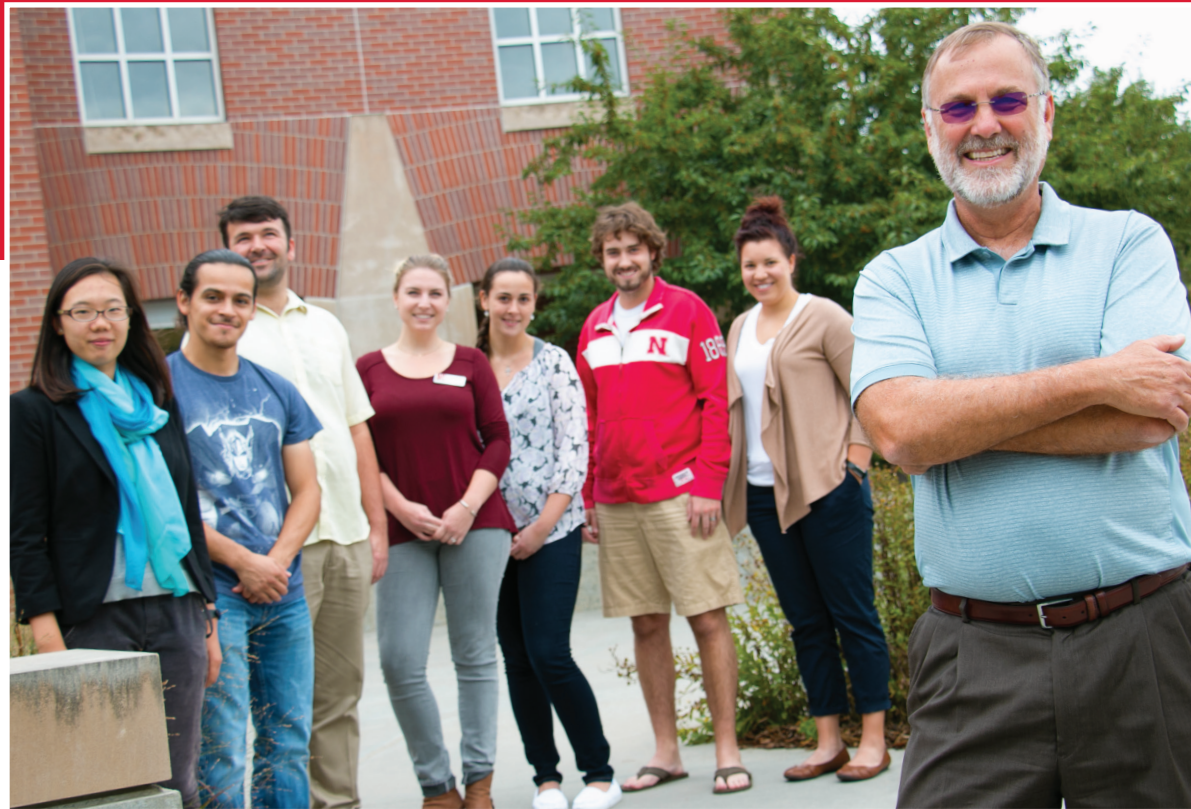
From left: Susan Sheridan, Amanda Witte, and graduate student Samantha Angell

Program Creates Pathways to Graduation

Donning gowns and caps, they joined their peers among Lincoln Northeast High School's 2014 graduating class. They waited patiently to cross the stage, accept their diplomas and finally, after four years, flip their tassels.

They are the 37 of 41 Lincoln Northeast students who, in ninth grade, joined the Building Bridges program—a dropout prevention initiative led by CYFS affiliate Michael Scheel and Gina Kunz, CYFS research associate professor. The program is designed to help freshmen transition to high school and navigate a four-year path to graduation.

The Building Bridges program was implemented in Lincoln Northeast and Lincoln North Star high schools in 2010 after a citywide push to raise graduation rates. Since then, 172 participating students have earned an average of 55-60 graduation credits their freshman year, Scheel said, putting them on track to graduate in four years.



Michael Scheel (far right) with graduate students from the Building Bridges Program.

“A key part of success in ninth grade is getting students to believe in themselves again,” said Scheel, professor of educational psychology. “Students in our program generally don’t like school, but we try to change their attitude from defeatist to ‘what will it take to succeed.’”

Part of what it takes for students to succeed, Scheel said, is a focus on individual strengths using positive psychology. The Building Bridges program is composed of six key components: fostering caring relationships; identifying and enhancing personal strengths; developing purposes for school; monitoring progress; connecting with home; and promoting student well-being.

Under Scheel’s supervision, first- and third-year students in UNL’s graduate counseling psychology program conduct weekly counseling sessions with participants in Building Bridges. During these sessions, counselors help students steer clear of avoidance goals, such as ‘Don’t fail math class,’ and support them in setting up approach goals—‘Earn a B in math class.’ They also assist students with emotional, personal and social difficulties, and conduct risk assessments for suicidal or self-injurious behavior.

“Identifying desired outcomes through approach goals is a big part of what we do,” Scheel said. “We also advocate for students and consult with teachers and guardians



“A key part of success in ninth grade is getting students to believe in themselves again.”

at home. In doing this, we try to connect different ecological systems.”

After an uptick in suicide episodes at several schools, the Building Bridges program has expanded to include a group counseling component. With curriculum developed by Alexandra Dahl, counseling psychology graduate student, the group sessions will equip students with skills to use at home and school, with an emphasis on positive psychology to encourage hope.

“Our society is so focused on deficits, and out of basic human emotion, there are so many negatives,” Dahl said. “If we can build up the positives, it can help with problem-solving, self-compassion and self-efficacy.”

The Building Bridges program has been continuously funded since 2004 through sources including the Woods Charitable Fund grant and the Lincoln Public Schools Dropout Prevention grant.



“My long-term goal is to improve children’s mealtime interactions with parents and childcare providers.”

Curriculum Feeds into Healthy Childcare Practices

While research has dispelled many unhealthy myths surrounding early childhood eating practices, such as asking children to clean their plates, many findings remain inaccessible and cost-prohibitive for childcare centers.

To mend this rift between research and practice, CYFS faculty affiliate Dipti Dev is equipping childcare providers with low-cost resources to implement positive eating practices. By developing an online video curriculum, she hopes to stem the surge of childhood obesity and provide a comprehensive resource for childcare centers.

The curriculum condenses research recommendations into seven positive eating strategies: adults modeling healthy eating; peer modeling; children serving themselves; praise for trying new foods; nutrition education; self-regulation support; and communication with parents. It also implements ideas directly from caregivers and includes resources to share with parents.

Dev, assistant professor of child, youth and family studies, is evaluating the reach of her curriculum and its effect on childcare providers’ knowledge and behavior, and

children’s healthy food choices. The project includes research on social media best practices, as she partners with Nebraska Early Childhood Extension to share curriculum through Twitter, Facebook and Pinterest.

“Up until now, no curriculum has focused on a holistic approach to feeding children,” Dev said. “My long-term goal is to improve children’s mealtime interactions with parents and childcare providers. I am taking a collaborative, bottom-up approach by working with practitioners to understand their challenges, and then informing researchers and policymakers.”

To extend strategic research to the realm of public policy, Dev is evaluating a Nebraska program aimed at enhancing childcare environments and improving children’s nutrition and physical activity. Funded by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, and the Nebraska Department of Education and Extension Innovation, the CYFS-housed project will streamline data collection and identify areas for additional resources.

As she works to connect research, policy and practice, Dev also prioritizes engagement with the next generation of researchers.

Dipti Dev encourages preschool children to eat healthy foods.



Through collaboration with 15 graduate and undergraduate students, she provides professional development and research opportunities that span the “full life cycle”—from literature review to program development to social media outreach and evaluation.

“I want to do research that real people can use, and I want to give students the full experience of translating research to practice,” Dev said.

Project Designed to Fashion STEM Interest

With a unique fusion of fashion and circuitry, a CYFS-housed project seeks to connect underrepresented populations to careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Using curriculum centered on wearable electronic textiles—with components including LED lights and conductive thread—Nebraska Wearable Technologies will teach engineering design concepts to public school students in grades 4-6 throughout the state.

The three-year project is led by an interdisciplinary team from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and University of Nebraska at Omaha, including CYFS faculty affiliate Brad Barker and CYFS research professor Gwen Nugent, and is funded with nearly \$1 million of support from the National Science Foundation.

The project will address a scarcity of hands-on engineering curriculum, which Barker says is critical in encouraging and developing



“When students combine computing and engineering with something wearable, it makes the project personally meaningful.”



The research team for Nebraska Wearable Technologies includes (from left) Neal Grandgenett, Gwen Nugent and Brad Barker.



the next generation of scientists and engineers—particularly for underrepresented groups, such as women. For instance, he has previously developed robotics projects for students, which generally attracted a 2:1 ratio of boys to girls.

However, in the inaugural pilot for Nebraska Wearable Technologies, girls comprised roughly 60 percent of participants. Barker attributes the project’s aesthetic elements and everyday utility to its broader appeal.

“When students combine computing and engineering with something wearable, it makes the project personally meaningful,” said Barker, associate professor and 4-H science and technology specialist. “Our expectations are that we’ll continue to see this as an alternative pathway for females to participate in STEM academics and build interesting STEM careers.”

Excitement around the program has doubled the expected number of participating

teachers, as school districts work with the research team to implement wearable technology curriculum both during and after the school day. By bridging formal and informal learning environments, the team hopes to further encourage student learning and interest in STEM.

“Making this program available outside of formal classroom instruction is important, because there are so many science concepts to cover in a typical school day,” Barker said. “With the after-school component of this program, kids get to do a deep dive and take the time to explore.”



Program Teaches Down-to-Earth Science

Atop a windblown bluff overlooking the Platte River, teachers collectively look down for hints of geologic history—beneath their feet, rock sediment offers erosive evidence that their vantage point was once a valley.

By expanding the concept of classroom, CYFS affiliate Mindi Searls hopes to provide Nebraska teachers—and their students—with a better understanding of Earth science.

With support from the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education and UNL's Center for Science, Math and Computer Education, the two-year project features interactive professional development workshops for middle and high school teachers.

Members of the project's research team are Leilani Arthurs, assistant professor of earth and atmospheric sciences; Elizabeth Lewis, associate professor of teaching, learning and

teacher education; and Peggy Tilgner, science education consultant.

Held in Ogallala and Ashland, Nebraska, the workshops are ideally situated for field-based learning and accessible for both rural and urban educators. In addition to on-site exploration and Earth science instruction, they also provide inquiry-based instructional materials. Searls takes the same inquiry-based approach when leading workshops,

giving teachers a unique learning perspective.

"When we're standing at the top of a bluff and find well-rounded gravel from a stream bed, I want teachers to make the connection," said Searls, research assistant professor of earth and atmospheric sciences. "I want them to have a conceptual understanding of what's going on in nature, which starts with observation and exploration, that they can then share with their students."

The project's first year focused on the hydrosphere, with workshops covering precipitation, floods, groundwater and the water cycle's role in landform development and environmental issues. Its second year centers on the geosphere, including instruction on plate tectonics, volcanoes and mineral resources.

These topics are delivered in the context of both contemporary and ancient Nebraska events, Searls said, making them easier to understand and apply.

"When discussing the geosphere, faults and earthquakes usually mean very little to people in Nebraska," Searls said. "However, we are sitting on one of the oldest rift zones in the world, which is 1.1 billion years old and used to be the site of active volcanoes and earthquakes."

Following the initial workshops, teachers



Mindi Searls

engage in follow-up sessions with their summer cohort. These sessions provide an opportunity for teachers to share ideas and receive feedback from facilitators and peers, and support the project's ultimate aim—improving classroom instruction.

"Many teachers don't have any type of background in geosciences," Searls said.

"We want to help them understand geology and provide them with tools to effectively implement it in the classroom."

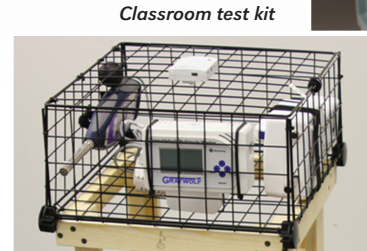
Study Measuring Indoor Impact on Achievement

From blueprints to building improvements, a CYFS-housed project is exploring engineering design as an approach to scale up student achievement.

With nearly \$1 million in funding from the Environmental Protection Agency, the four-year project will study schools' indoor environmental effects on the academic achievement of K-12 students.

Led by professor Lily Wang, the research team includes professor Clarence Waters and associate professor Josephine Lau from UNL's Durham School of Architectural Engineering and Construction, as well as Jim Bovaird, director of CYFS' Nebraska Academy for Methodology, Analytics and Psychometrics.

Bovaird will contribute expertise in methodological applications, as the team first analyzes a public database on student achievement and high performance 'green' schools in California. With this foundation, the team hopes to find patterns that could help in



Classroom test kit

preparing their study of Nebraska and Iowa schools.

As the team focuses on local schools, they will install classroom test kits to collect real-time data on indoor air quality, thermal conditions, lighting and acoustics. Measurements will be taken in the fall, winter and spring for approximately 240 classrooms over two years and will then be compared with each classroom's student achievement scores—giving researchers a room-specific understanding of environmental impacts.

"Previous studies have not included such a wide swatch of objective metrics, a wide range of K-12 schools or extensive demographics," Wang said. "Our results

will inform school districts on which indoor environmental factors have the greatest impact on student achievement, helping them prioritize areas for improvement."

The team's final objective hinges on community involvement; they will present project details to participating classrooms and solicit input from school principals, facility managers and teachers. An additional partnership with DLR Group, a local architecture and engineering firm, will provide project oversight and a pipeline for findings.

"We want to help people value the research and science we're doing," Wang said. "To do that, we need to engage them in the process and get results out to groups that will use it."



Jim Bovaird and Lily Wang

Educational Outreach Engineers Student Opportunities

When asked to draw "engineering," children's artistic renditions may depict a mad scientist with lab goggles or a train operator. CYFS faculty affiliate Sally Wei, coordinator of engineering outreach and education, wants to change this image.

As part of her mission to improve engineering literacy throughout Nebraska, Wei is



Sally Wei speaks at the 2015 PLTW Nebraska State Conference.

heading the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Engineering Ambassador Program. The UNL program, which began in 2014, trains undergraduate students to deliver K-12 engineering presentations throughout Nebraska and the Midwest. Each presentation focuses on a specific engineering topic and is paired with an interactive activity.

"We want to demystify engineering," Wei said. "Our focus is teaching kids about the engineering design process, which includes problem solving, critical thinking and learning that failure is OK—these are all important life skills."

The presentations are meant to bridge classroom theory and engineering application, Wei said, but they are only a start. To put formal engineering curriculum in the hands of teachers throughout the state, she also serves as affiliate director for Project Lead the Way (PLTW)—an organization that provides programs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics for K-12 teachers.



Sally Wei (top right) with students in the UNL Engineering Ambassador Program.

To better connect engineering education and enterprise, Wei hosted the 2015 PLTW Nebraska State Conference. The inaugural event drew more than 150 teachers, administrators, school counselors, university professors and engineering industry representatives. The conference provides yet another platform to promote student opportunities, Wei said, and encourage engineering awareness.

Students Build Research Foundation

Walking the halls of her former elementary school, Alejandra Ayotitla never imagined she'd one day return to help parents and teachers better understand each other—something she's accomplished as a bilingual translator for TAPP, a CYFS research project designed to bridge the gap between home and school.

She also never imagined she'd be facilitating these connections in her second year of college.

Ayotitla, a CYFS student affiliate, is one of 11 undergraduate students who partnered with CYFS during the 2014-15 school year. Many undergraduate students contribute to CYFS research through the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's UCARE program, which awards stipends for undergraduate research and activities, or through opportunities including the UNL McNair Scholars Program, which supports first-generation college students and underrepresented student groups.



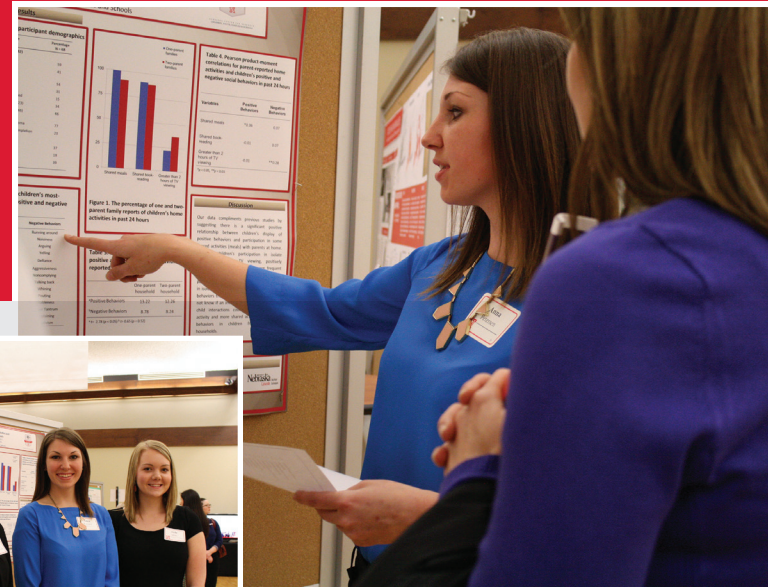
CYFS student affiliates at the 2015 UNL Research Fair's undergraduate poster session include, from left, Chelsey Wehrmann, Rebekah Whitham, Anna Petersen and Halle Miller.

"The scope of our research is made possible with the input and dedication of students, whose work has a tangible impact on our outcomes," said Lisa Knoche, CYFS assistant director for research. "As they help us broaden our research capacity, we in turn are excited to provide mentorship and guidance in shaping their academic careers."

For student affiliate Anna Petersen, working on CYFS' Getting Ready research project has also helped prepare her for graduate school. At UNL's 2015 Undergraduate

Research Fair, she presented comparative research on children's behavior in single and dual parent households. This research has provided opportunities to make professional connections with professors, Petersen said, and helped her engage at a deeper level with undergraduate coursework.

"Many of my recommendations for graduate school came from the Getting Ready project," Petersen said. "I'm excited to move forward with my career, and the research background I've developed will be very helpful."



MAP Academy Expands Educational Initiatives

With a mission focused on advancing interdisciplinary research, the Nebraska Academy for Methodology, Analytics and Psychometrics (MAP) has launched new initiatives to inform researchers and spark collaboration.

The Nebraska Methodology Workshop, hosted by the MAP Academy and interdisciplinary partners, features visiting scholars from across the country. Rex Kline, professor of psychology at Concordia University, presented "New Developments in Structural Equation Modeling" during the fall 2014 workshop, while David Kaplan, professor of quantitative methods at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, presented an overview of Bayesian statistics for the spring 2015 event.

"To develop the rigorous methodology needed to answer questions in the social and behavioral sciences, it is important to facilitate a critical mass of scholars who can network and form partnerships," said Jim Bovaird, director of the MAP Academy. "We want to provide a meeting place, a common ground, that enables this critical mass and opens doors for collaboration."

With the introduction of the Emerging Scholars Series, the MAP Academy has also strengthened its commitment to researchers in the early stages of their careers. Bethany Bray, outreach director of Penn State University's Methodology Center, led the inaugural April 2015 event, which included a statistics workshop and a keynote

presentation on innovative approaches to latent class analysis. Its primary aim, Bovaird said, is to provide an opportunity for graduate students and postdoctoral researchers to receive mentorship from early career professionals and gain new perspectives.

"We want to provide a platform for ongoing methodology education, which includes researchers at all stages of their career," Bovaird said. "By hosting visiting scholars and sponsoring educational opportunities, we hope to strengthen the rigor and ultimate impact of interdisciplinary research."



Above from left: David Kaplan, Rex Kline and Bethany Bray. To view these and other presentations, please visit: mapacademy.unl.edu

Faculty Affiliates Receive Layman Awards

With collaborative support and seed funding, CYFS faculty affiliates are prepared to grow their research base.

CYFS provided grant proposal and development assistance to eight faculty in the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's College of Education and Human Sciences—all of whom received 2015-16 Layman Awards. The award, funded by UNL's Office of Research and Economic Development, provides \$10,000 in seed money for untenured faculty and supports researchers in their pursuit of external funding.

Comprehensive grant support is reflective of the center's primary goals, said CYFS director Susan Sheridan, which include building the capacity of researchers and advancing high-quality, interdisciplinary work.

"We are excited to partner with Layman recipients as they build and expand upon their research," Sheridan said. "The supports we provide in the preparation of research proposals and execution of funded projects are instrumental in achieving the vision we share with faculty affiliates—engaging in research that makes a difference."



The following CEHS faculty received Layman Awards (from top left):

Anthony Albano, assistant professor, Department of Educational Psychology
"Improving and Evaluating Assessment Literacy in Preservice and Practicing Teachers"

Amy Dent, research assistant professor, CYFS
"The Efficacy of Self-Regulation Interventions: A Series of Meta-Analyses"

Lauren Gatti, assistant professor, Department of Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education
"Learning to Teach in Urban Teacher Residencies: A Comparative Study"

Deryl Hatch, assistant professor, Department of Educational Administration
"Unpacking the Black Box of Community College Student Success Programs: Discovering What Works and Why"

Leslie Hawley, research assistant professor, CYFS
"Combining Latent Variable Modeling Techniques With Cross-Classified Mixed Effect Models For Use in Longitudinal Research"

Lorey Wheeler, research assistant professor, CYFS
"Mexican-Origin Youths' Health-Risk Behavior: Interplay Between Stress, Familial, Cultural and Work Process"

Natalie Williams, assistant professor, Department of Child, Youth and Family Studies
"Implications of Insecure Parent-Child Attachment for Early Childhood Obesity Risk"

Jiangang Xia, assistant professor, Department of Educational Administration
"The Impacts of No Child Left Behind on School Leadership: An Empirical Examination Based on National SASS Data"

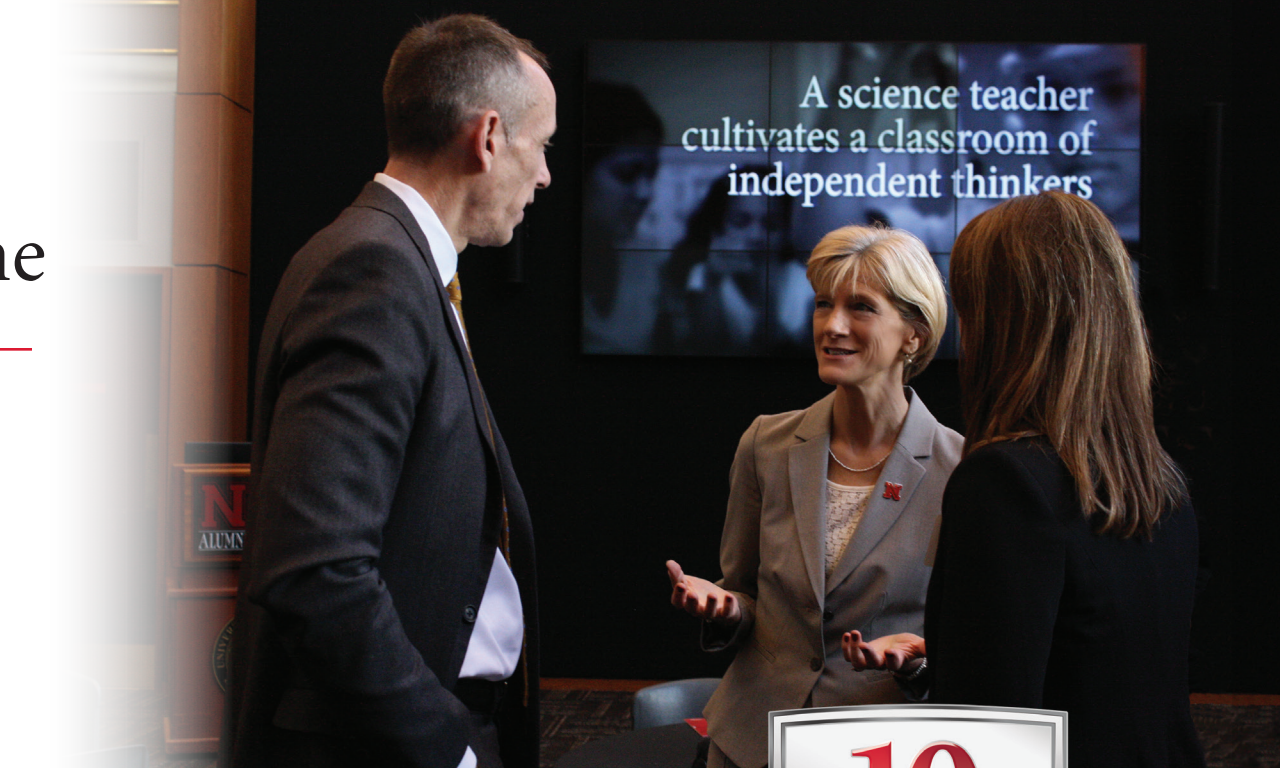
CYFS Marks Decade Milestone

To commemorate a decade of collaborative and interdisciplinary research, CYFS hosted a November 2014 anniversary breakfast at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The celebration opened with remarks from Ronnie Green, vice chancellor of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources; Marjorie Kostelnik, dean of the College of Education and Human Sciences; Prem Paul, vice chancellor for research and economic development; and Susan Sheridan, director of CYFS.

"One thing we realized from the very start is that we are in this together," Sheridan said. "We have continuously enlisted the support and expertise of remarkable scholars, families, educators, administrators and organizations. These partnerships have inspired, encouraged and sustained us—and continue to guide our course."

The celebration featured keynote speaker Thomas Brock, commissioner of the National Center for Education Research in the U.S.



Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. He discussed "Education Funding, Research and Opportunity" and acknowledged the impact of the CYFS-housed National Center for Research on Rural Education.

"The work of CYFS is exemplary, including the close school partnerships you've established and the salient issues you're researching," Brock said. "The center is distinctive in its hands-on efforts to change policy and move it in positive directions."



For a glimpse at a decade of impactful collaborations, research and results, please visit our 10-year anniversary website:

cyfs.unl.edu/2014

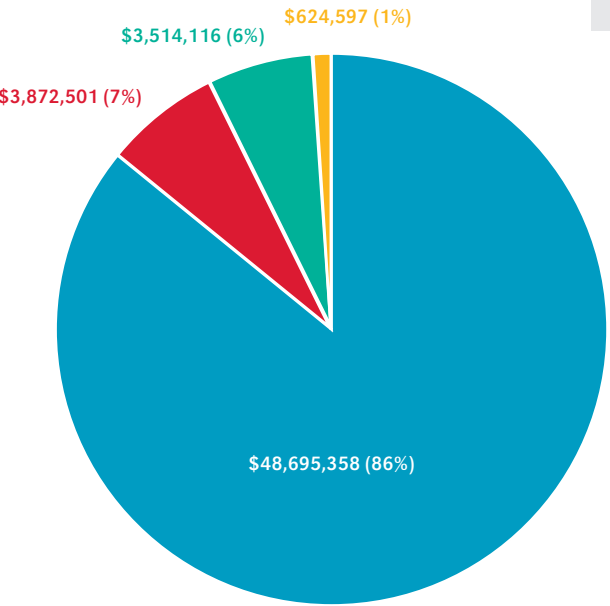
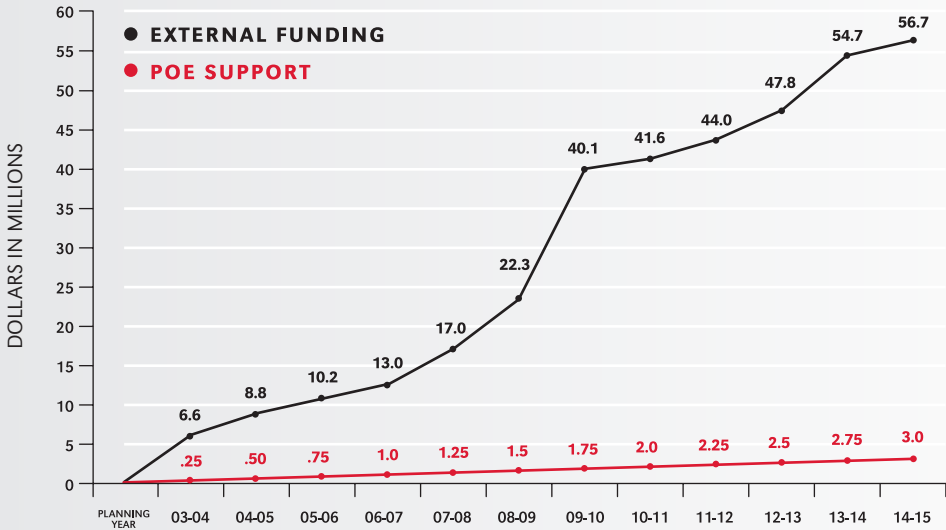
Snapshot of Cumulative CYFS Grant Activity

Total Program of Excellence funds to date	\$3,000,000
Total dollar amount of all grants funded	\$56,706,572
Total dollar amount of external grants funded	\$56,081,975
Total dollar amount of internal grants funded	\$624,597
Total number of grants funded	151
Total number of grants submitted	369
Total dollar amount of grants submitted	\$308,675,741
Percentage of grant dollars from federal agencies	86%
Hit rate of funded grants (based on known decisions)	43%
Return rate to UNL for every \$1 invested	\$18.90

Support for the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools (CYFS) is generated primarily through Program of Excellence (PoE) funds and external grants. The table to the left highlights information regarding grants submitted, grants awarded, “hit rate,” total dollar amounts awarded, and return to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln since the center’s inception in 2004.

Cumulative External Grant Dollars vs. Program of Excellence (PoE) Support

The line graph to the right illustrates the center’s cumulative external funding (i.e., federal, state and foundation) relative to Program of Excellence (PoE) support from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.



Sources of Funding

The pie chart to the left shows the cumulative dollar amounts and proportions of funding that CYFS researchers have garnered from federal, state, foundation and internal (i.e., University of Nebraska-Lincoln) sources.

- Federal
- State
- Foundation
- Internal

Percentages rounded to nearest 1%

Active Grants & Contracts

The following grants and contracts received new or ongoing funding during 2014–2015.

Federal Awards (\$27,169,067)

Administration for Children and Families

Early Head Start Home Visitors Identification of Risk for Maltreatment
PIs: Alayna Schreier, David Hansen, Mary Fran Flood

Centers for Disease Control

NAP SACC Web Development and Analysis
PI: Dipti Dev

Environmental Protection Agency

Evidence-Based Interactions Between Indoor Environmental Factors and Their Effects on K–12 Student Achievement
PIs: Lily Wang, James Bovaird, Josephine Lau, Clarence Waters

National Institutes of Health

Early Temperament, Social/Contextual Support, and Adolescent Adjustment
PIs: Lisa Crockett, Kathleen Moritz Rudasill, Eric Buhs, James Bovaird

Stressors, Protective Factors, and Substance Use Among Homeless Youth and Young Adults
PIs: Kimberly Tyler, Kristen Olson

National Science Foundation

Nebraska Wearable Technologies
PIs: Bradley Barker, Gwen Nugent, Jennifer Melander, Carl Nelson, Neal Grandgenett

Strategies: Action at a Distance
PIs: Daniel Claes, Jon Pedersen, Gregory Snow, Greg Welch

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Family Style Dining: An Approach to Improve Healthier Meal Choices in Preschoolers
PIs: Dipti Dev, Susan Sheridan, Greg Welch

U.S. Department of Education

A Meta-Analysis of Parent Involvement Interventions and Family–School Partnerships’ Effects on Student Outcomes
PIs: Susan Sheridan, Elizabeth Moorman Kim, S. Natasha Beretvas

A Randomized Trial of Conjoint Behavioral Consultation (CBC) in Rural Educational Settings: Efficacy for Elementary Students with Disruptive Behaviors
PIs: Susan Sheridan, Todd Glover, Gina Kunz, James Bovaird

Efficacy of the Getting Ready Intervention at Supporting Parental Engagement and Positive Outcomes for Preschool Children at Educational Risk
PIs: Susan Sheridan, Lisa Knoche, Carolyn Pope Edwards, James Bovaird

Language Bases of Skilled Reading Comprehension
PIs: Tiffany Hogan, J. Ron Nelson, James Bovaird

Mountain Prairie Upgrade Partnership Itinerant (MPUP-I)
PI: Malinda Eccarius

National Center for Research on Rural Education (R²Ed)
PIs: Susan Sheridan, Todd Glover, Gwen Nugent, Gina Kunz, James Bovaird

Rural Ed Technical Paper
PIs: James Bovaird, Susan Sheridan, Leslie Hawley

School Psychology Specialization in Toddlers With Autism Spectrum Disorders
PIs: Susan Sheridan, Therese Mathews, Gina Kunz

U.S. Department of Labor

Alternative Transportation Fuel Systems—Advancing the Workforce
PI: Greg Welch

State Awards (\$756,833)

Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education

Enhancing Nebraska 6–12 Teachers’ Knowledge of Earth Science Content
PIs: Mindi Searls, Leilani Arthurs, Elizabeth Lewis

Nebraska Department of Education

Evaluating the Impact of School Improvement Grants in Nebraska Title I Schools
PI: Greg Welch

Nebraska Multi-Tiered System of Support Implementation Support Team
PI: Tanya Ihlo

Foundation / Other Awards (\$2,243,529)

BECI Superintendents Early Childhood Education Plan
Funding Source: Buffett Early Childhood Institute
PIs: Dawn Davis, Lisa Knoche, Greg Welch

Bullying Prevention Center—Education and Outreach Division
Funding Source: Andrew Gomez Dream Foundation
PI: Susan Swearer

Combining Latent Variable Modeling Techniques with Cross-Classified Mixed Effect Models for Use in Longitudinal Research
Funding Source: UNL Office of Research and Economic Development
PI: Leslie Hawley

Conjoint Behavioral Consultation: A Cross-Systemic Intervention to Manage Overweight and Obesity for Low Income Preschoolers
Funding Source: UNL Office of Research and Economic Development
PIs: Brandy Clarke, Susan Sheridan, Lorey Wheeler

Conjoint Behavioral Consultation: A Cross-Systemic Intervention to Manage Overweight and Obesity in Early Childhood
Funding Source: University of Nebraska
PIs: Susan Sheridan, Brandy Clarke

Conjoint Behavioral Consultation via Distance Delivery (CBC-D): An Evaluation of Efficacy and Acceptability
Funding Source: Society for the Study of School Psychology
PIs: Michael Coutts, Susan Sheridan

Determining the Operative Elements to Improve Parent–Teacher Relationships During Conjoint Behavioral Consultation
Funding Source: Society for the Study of School Psychology
PIs: Shannon Holmes, Susan Sheridan

Developing a Model for Quality of Life: Identifying Domains and Determinants for Rural Ethnic Minorities
Funding Source: UNL Rural Futures Institute
PIs: Maria Rosario de Guzman, Rodrigo Cantarero, Gina Causin, Tonia Durden, Soo-Young Hong, Yan Xia

Development and Evaluation of Videos to Help Students Understand Basic Food Preparation
Funding Source: UNL College of Education and Human Sciences
PI: Georgia Jones

Early Childhood Course Conversion
Funding Source: Buffett Early Childhood Fund
PI: Carolyn Pope Edwards

Early Steps to School Success
Funding Source: Save the Children Foundation
PI: Helen Raikes

Enhancing the 4-H Common Measures: An Evaluation Proposal
Funding Source: National 4-H Council
PI: Leslie Hawley

Family, Cultural, and Work Contexts as Linked to Mexican-Origin Youths’ Health Risk Behavior
Funding Source: UNL Research Council
PI: Lorey Wheeler

Impact of Massage Therapy on Well-Being for Parents of Children Recovering from Traumatic Injury or Illness
Funding Source: The Massage Therapy Foundation
PIs: Natalie Williams, Paul Springer, Judy Burnfield, Jeff Stack, Greg Welch

Implications of Insecure Parent–Child Attachment for Early Childhood Obesity Risk
Funding Source: UNL Office of Research and Economic Development
PIs: Natalie Williams, David Hansen, Dipti Dev

Improving and Evaluating Assessment Literacy in Preservice and Practicing Teachers
Funding Source: UNL Office of Research and Economic Development
PIs: Anthony Albano, Jessica Jonson, Wendy Smith

Learning to Teach in Urban Teacher Residencies: A Comparative Study
Funding Source: UNL Office of Research and Economic Development
PI: Lauren Gatti

LPS Building Bridges
Funding Source: Lincoln Public Schools
PIs: Michael Scheel, Gina Kunz

Math Early On
Funding Source: Buffett Early Childhood Fund
PIs: Ruth Heaton, Carolyn Pope Edwards, Victoria Molfese

Mexican-Origin Youths’ Health-Risk Behavior: Interplay Between Stress, Familial, Cultural, and Work Processes
Funding Source: UNL Office of Research and Economic Development
PI: Lorey Wheeler

Pilot Test of a Cross-System Intervention Managing Overweight and Obesity for Young Children
Funding Source: Society for the Study of School Psychology
PI: Brandy Clarke

Temperament and Preschool Classroom Processes as Predictors of Kindergarten Achievement for Children with Demographic Risk
Funding Source: American Educational Research Association
PI: Kathleen Moritz Rudasill

The Efficacy of Self-Regulation Interventions: A Series of Meta-Analyses
Funding Source: UNL Office of Research and Economic Development
PI: Amy Dent

The Impacts of No Child Left Behind on School Leadership: An Empirical Examination Based on National SASS Data
Funding Source: UNL Office of Research and Economic Development
PI: Jiangang Xia

Unpacking the Black Box of Community College Student Success Programs: Discovering What Works and Why
Funding Source: UNL Office of Research and Economic Development
PI: Deryl Hatch

Select publications are listed below, with faculty and student affiliates in bold.

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Janeigh Castillo-Barraza

*Efficacy of the Getting Ready Intervention:
Enhancing Young Children's Behaviors in the Home Setting*
Faculty Sponsor: Susan Sheridan

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