

Priorities for the Institute of Education Sciences
as approved by
The National Board for Education Sciences

The long-term goals associated with the Institute's priorities are fourfold: First, to develop or identify a substantial number of programs, practices, policies, and approaches that enhance academic achievement and that can be widely deployed; second, to identify what does not work and what is problematic or inefficient, and thereby encourage innovation and further research; third, to gain fundamental understanding of the processes that underlie variations in the effectiveness of education programs, practices, policies, and approaches; and fourth, to develop delivery systems for the results of education research that will be routinely used by policymakers, educators, and the general public when making education decisions. By providing an independent, scientific base of evidence and promoting and enabling its use, the Institute aims to further the transformation of education into an evidence-based field, and thereby enable the nation to educate all of its students effectively.

In pursuit of its goals, the Institute will support research, conduct evaluations, and compile statistics in education that conform to rigorous scientific standards, and will disseminate and promote the use of research in ways that are objective, free of bias in their interpretation, and readily accessible.

The Institute's over-arching priority is research that contributes to improved academic achievement for all students, and particularly for those whose education prospects are hindered by inadequate education services and conditions associated with poverty, race/ethnicity, limited English proficiency, disability, and family circumstance.

With academic achievement as the major priority, the Institute will focus on outcomes that differ by periods of education. In the infancy and preschool period, the outcomes of interest will be those that enhance readiness for schooling, for example, language skills, and for infants and toddlers with disabilities, developmental outcomes. In kindergarten through 12th grade, the core academic outcomes of reading and writing (including reading and writing in the disciplines), mathematics, and science will be emphasized, as will the behaviors and social skills that support learning in school and successful transitions to employment, independent living, and post-secondary education. At the post-secondary level, the focus will be on enrollment in and completion of programs that prepare students for successful careers and lives. The same outcomes are emphasized for students with disabilities across each of these periods, and include the functional outcomes that improve educational and transitional results. The acquisition of basic skills by adults with low levels of education is also a priority.

In conducting research on academic outcomes, the Institute will concentrate on conditions within the control of the education system, with the aim of identifying, developing, and validating effective education programs, practices, policies, and approaches as well as understanding the factors that influence variation in their effectiveness such as implementation. Conditions that are of highest priority to the Institute are in the areas of curriculum instruction, assessment (including the identification of students with disabilities), the quality of the education workforce, and the systems and policies that affect these conditions and their interrelationships (for example, accountability systems, delivery mechanisms including technology, and policies

that support the ability of parents to improve educational results for their children through such means as choice of education services and provision of school-related learning opportunities in the home).

The successful pursuit of the Institute's goals and priorities requires increased capacity to produce and use rigorous education research. To that end, the Institute's priorities include support of post-doctoral training and interdisciplinary doctoral training in the education sciences, development and refinement of education research methods, and expansion and use for research of longitudinal databases that link student data to information on the conditions that affect outcomes, such as curriculum. To assure increased capacity to use and apply the results of research, the Institute will support systematic reviews of evidence, enhanced access to findings through advanced information systems, and outreach to parents, educators, students, policymakers, and the general public.

These are not exclusive or absolute priorities: To the extent that resources permit and the Institute's priorities are being adequately addressed, the Institute may address other important education issues.