

INSTITUTE *for* EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

Advancing Notre Dame's Commitment to the Future of Schools



There are few issues more critical to our nation's future than our ability to educate and form young people. The United States spends more per capita on K-12 education than nearly any other country, but we have witnessed a troubling decline in educational outcomes and a persistent "achievement gap" between white and minority students.

The University of Notre Dame's Institute for Educational Initiatives (IEI) is uniquely situated to take steps—in its research, teaching, and service—to address today's serious challenges and to improve the education of the young, particularly the disadvantaged. In doing so, the IEI is advancing Notre Dame's commitment to the future of schools.

Prior to the 1970s, Notre Dame expressed that commitment largely through its Department of Education. Then-President Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, C.S.C., closed that department, seeing a need for bolder, more entrepreneurial, and more interdisciplinary ways to serve children through K-12 education. In the early 1990s, Notre Dame recommitted itself to play a major role in the revitalization of America's schools, and this action has yielded a number of successful initiatives.

Today, the University has affirmed its vision as "a center for learning whose intellectual and religious traditions converge to make it a healing, unifying, enlightening force for a world deeply in need." Exciting efforts to improve schools, both public and private, are flourishing on campus with the support of the Institute for Educational Initiatives, as education policy-makers around the nation have entered a period of intense reassessment and experimentation.

The IEI and Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) are currently among the leaders in the 2011-2012 Notre Dame Forum, a series of events engaging the entire University in exploration and action focused on the future of K-12 education and titled, "Reimagining School: To Nurture the Soul of a Nation." (Visit forum.nd.edu for more information.)

An overview of the IEI's work and structure follows. Find more details at iei.nd.edu.

AREAS OF FOCUS FOR THE IEI'S EDUCATION INITIATIVES INCLUDE:

LEADERSHIP: Investing in professional formation

RESEARCH: Investing in knowledge and ideas

INNOVATION: Investing in professional service and outreach

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ACADEMIC UNITS PURSUING THESE GOALS WITHIN THE IEI INCLUDE:

Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE)

Center for Research on Educational Opportunity (CREO)

Education, Schooling, and Society (ESS) Interdisciplinary Minor for Undergraduates

Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE):

ACE is the nation's leading force to sustain, strengthen, and transform Catholic K-12 education, with a special focus on serving under-resourced schools and disadvantaged children. Invited to deploy resources in dioceses and schools across the country, ACE prepares a new generation of teachers and school leaders; provides a range of professional skills and services; and stimulates partnerships and advocacy. The entire ACE community strives to ensure that none of today's social and economic hurdles will keep any child from experiencing the gift of an excellent Catholic education.

Founded in 1993 by Rev. Timothy Scully, C.S.C., and Rev. Sean McGraw, C.S.C., ACE is best known for its innovative program of formation that has sent forth cadres of young teachers eager to serve in under-resourced Catholic schools. ACE has become the nation's premier provider of talent and resources to Catholic K-12 schools. (Visit ace.nd.edu for more information.)

Center for Research on Educational Opportunity (CREO):

CREO is a center of excellence for the study of educational opportunities, the organization of schools, and the effects of schools on student outcomes, with special attention to less privileged students and Catholic schools. Through basic and applied research on schools and the learning process, CREO faculty and students pursue high-quality scholarship that has a significant impact on educational research, policy and practice. The director of CREO is distinguished sociology professor Mark Berends; the latest of his books is *School Choice and School Improvement*. Current CREO projects include a Catholic School Effectiveness initiative, with funding from the Walton Family Foundation, and the "What Makes Schools Work" project sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. (Visit creo.nd.edu for more information.)

Education, Schooling, and Society (ESS):

ESS, the largest undergraduate minor for students in Notre Dame's College of Arts and Letters, offers the ability to acquire, through the tools of the liberal arts and social sciences, national and international perspectives on pressing questions that face America's educational system. Areas of inquiry include the quality of schools, both public and Catholic; the degree to which families have adequate choices to ensure that their children flourish; and education in the context of society, locally and globally. The ESS minor encourages students to view educational issues through the lenses of numerous disciplines. The director of the ESS minor program is Stuart Greene, the former associate dean for Undergraduate Studies in Arts and Letters. (Visit nd.edu/~edss for more information.)

The director of the Institute for Educational Initiatives is Rev. Timothy Scully, C.S.C. The institute, established in 1996, fosters collaborations and scholarship among more than 50 IEI fellows drawn from a range of colleges and departments across the University of Notre Dame.