

# Patrick A. Graff

South Bend, IN

[pgraff@federationforchildren.org](mailto:pgraff@federationforchildren.org)

## EDUCATION

---

- Jan. 2026      Ph.D. Sociology, University of Notre Dame  
Center for Research on Educational Opportunity (CREO)  
Program for Interdisciplinary Education Research (PIER)  
*Dissertation:* “Trust in Teachers: The Role of Teacher Experience, Quality, and Relational Trust in Schools”  
*Committee:* Mark Berends (Chair), Amy Langenkamp, Richard Williams, Joseph Waddington
- 2019            M.A. Sociology, University of Notre Dame
- 2013            M.Ed., University of Notre Dame  
Alliance for Catholic Education Teaching Fellows Program
- 2011            B.A., University of Notre Dame  
Majors: *Philosophy (Honors), Chinese*  
Minor: *Philosophy, Politics, and Economics*  
Honor’s Thesis: *Doing Justice: Amartya Sen and the Just Individual*
- International*
- 2010            Peking University (北京大学), Beijing, China  
*Spring Semester International Student*
- 2010            FuJen Catholic University (輔仁大學), Taipei, Taiwan  
*Summer Term International Student*

## EDUCATION & POLICY EXPERIENCE

---

- 2025 – Current      *Senior Fellow for policy and research*  
American Federation for Children (AFC), Dallas, TX (remote)  
- School choice policy expert and advisor to the AFC government affairs team. Develops school choice policy, advances legislative priorities, manages and curates internal data infrastructure, and conducts school choice research. Educates internal and external audiences of fellows, school leaders, advocates, lobbyists, and legislators on questions of school choice research and policy design.
- 2022 – 2025        *Director of Legislative Policy*  
American Federation for Children (AFC), Dallas, TX (remote)

- Spring 2021      *Education Policy Fellow*  
 American Federation for Children (AFC), Washington D.C. (remote)  
 - Six-month fellowship in education policy. Developed a novel school choice policy called Teacher Spending Accounts and tracked legislation.
- 2018 – 2019      *Graduate Fellow – Education Policy*  
 Office of the Mayor, City of South Bend  
 - Education advisor to Deputy Chief of Staff, Chief of Staff, and Mayor Pete Buttigieg. Mayor’s Office liaison to the South Bend Community Schools Corporation.
- 2013 – 2016      *Associate Director*  
 Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) Teaching Fellows  
 University of Notre Dame, Master of Education Program  
 - Recruited and selected an annual cohort of ~80 recent college graduates for Notre Dame’s teacher preparation program. Provided professional, administrative, and personal support for first and second year teachers

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

---

- Fall 2021      **Statistics for Sociological Research (SOC 30903)**  
*Professor of Record, Univ. of Notre Dame*
- Fall 2020      **Statistics for Sociological Research (SOC 30903)**  
*Tutor*
- Fall 2016      **Introduction to Social Problems (SOC 10033)**  
*Teaching Assistant, Professor Megan Andrew, Univ. of Notre Dame*
- 2015-2016      **Moreau First Year Experience (FYS 10101, 10102)**  
*Professor of Record, Univ. of Notre Dame*  
 - Discussion based class aimed at integrating student academic, co-curricular, and residential experiences. Course emphasizes cultural competency, student wellness, professionalization, and spiritual growth
- Spring 2015  
 Spring 2016      **Education Law and Policy (ESS 30605)**  
*Teaching Assistant, Professor John Schoenig, Univ. of Notre Dame*  
 - Organized class meetings, provided written formative feedback, and graded student papers
- Fall 2014      **Contemporary Topics in Philosophy of Education (ESS 30630)**  
*Teaching Assistant, Professor Maria McKenna, Univ. of Notre Dame*  
 - Provided feedback on student papers



## RESEARCH INTERESTS

---

School Choice  
Teacher Turnover

Education Policy  
Program Evaluation

Teacher Quality  
Quant Methods / Causal Inference

Comprehensive Exams: Sociology of Education, Statistics and Research Methods

## PUBLISHED PAPERS & POLICY BRIEFS

---

Hwang, NaYoung; Graff, Patrick; and Berends, Mark. (2024) "[Racialized Early Grade \(Mis\)Behavior: Effects of Same Race Teachers on Elementary School Student Discipline](#)" at AERA Open

Graff, Patrick. (2023) "[Teacher Spending Accounts: Supporting All Teachers](#)" at the American Enterprise Institute

Hwang, NaYoung; Graff, Patrick; and Berends, Mark. (2022) "[Timing and Frequency Matter: Same Race/Ethnicity Teacher and Student Achievement by School Level and Classroom Organization](#)" at Educational Policy

## IN PREPARATION FOR SUBMISSION

---

Graff, Patrick. "Scale or Spend? School Choice Competition vs. New Education Spending: Estimating the Return on Investment for Public School Students" Policy Brief. Publication in February 2026.

Graff, Patrick; Fitzpatrick, Brian. "Declining Public School Enrollment and the Rise of Private School Choice" Accepted – AEFPP annual conference

Graff, Patrick. "Trust in Teachers: Teacher Perceptions of Trust as a Predictor of Teacher Retention" (Dissertation Paper)

Graff, Patrick. "Disentangling Teacher Impacts on Student Disciplinary Outcomes: The Effect of New and Unqualified Teachers" (Dissertation Paper)

Graff, Patrick. "Moving Teacher Quality across School Sector: Differences in Teacher Value-Added across Traditional Public, Charter, Magnet, Catholic, and Other Private Schools" (Dissertation Paper)

Graff, Patrick. "Teachers in Transition: School Organization and the Impact of Teacher Turnover on Student Achievement"

## **RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS & LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY**

---

- 2026 Graff, Patrick. “The Federal Scholarship Tax Credit” House Education Policy Committee Hearing. Philadelphia, PA.
- 2025 Graff, Patrick. “Scale or Spend? School Choice Competition vs. New Education Spending: Estimating the Return on Investment for Public School Students” Legislator Summit. San Diego, CA.
- 2025 Graff, Patrick. “Scale or Spend? School Choice Competition vs. New Education Spending: Estimating the Return on Investment for Public School Students” RSLC Legislator Education Summit. Cincinnati, OH.
- 2025 Graff, Patrick. “Set Back or Scarred? The Short and Longer Run Effects of New and Unqualified Teachers on Student Behavior in Kindergarten through 5th Grade” Panel Presentation at Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP) conference. Washington D.C.
- 2025 Graff, Patrick. SB295, House Education Funding Committee Hearing – legislative testimony. Concord, New Hampshire.
- 2025 Graff, Patrick. “Comparing School Choice Policies” Presentation to McLeod Fellowship Meeting. St. Petersburg, Florida.
- 2025 Graff, Patrick. Reform Leaders Summit. Tampa, FL
- 2025 Graff, Patrick. “Scale or Spend? Estimating the Benefits of Private School Choice vs. General Education Spending for Public School Students” Accepted Paper – Presentation at the International School Choice and Reform Conference. Fort Lauderdale, FL.
- 2024 Graff, Patrick. “School Choice Myths” Presentation to AFC School Leader Fellows. Scottsdale, Arizona.
- 2024 Graff, Patrick. Reform Leaders Summit. Tampa, FL
- 2024 Graff, Patrick. “The Competitive Effects of School Choice,” House Committee Hearing – legislative testimony. Boise, Idaho.
- 2024 Graff, Patrick. Black Minds Matter McLeod Fellowship Meeting. St. Petersburg, Florida.
- 2024 Graff, Patrick. “The Competitive Effects of School Choice,” Senate Committee Hearing – legislative testimony. Lincoln, Nebraska.

- 2024 Graff, Patrick. “New Teachers Across Sector Effects on Student Math Achievement in Traditional Public, Charter, and Catholic Schools” Accepted Paper – Presentation at the International School Choice and Reform Conference. Madrid, Spain.
- 2023 Graff, Patrick Reform Leaders Summit. Tampa, FL
- 2022 Graff, Patrick. “Trust in Teachers: The Role of Relational Trust in Teacher Retention” Invited Session for AERA Dissertation Grant recipients at the American Education Research Association annual conference. San Diego, California
- 2021 Graff, Patrick. “Set Back or Scarred? Short and Long-Term Effects of New Teachers on Student Suspension” Accepted Paper Presentation – Sociology of Education section at American Sociological Association (ASA) annual conference. Chicago, Illinois (Online – Coronavirus)
- 2020 Graff, Patrick. “The Revolving Classroom Door: School Level Effects of Teacher Turnover on Math Achievement” Paper Presentation – Education Policy and Inequality in K-12 Schools section at American Sociological Association (ASA) annual conference. San Francisco, California (Presented Online – Coronavirus)
- 2019 Graff, Patrick. “Teachers in Transition: The Impact of Teacher Turnover on Math Achievement across Sector in Indiana” Paper Presentation at Midwest Sociology of Education (MSOE) conference. Northwestern University, Illinois.
- 2019 Graff, Patrick. “When the Numbers Don’t Add Up: Response to Teacher Shortage and the Impacts of Uncertified and Emergency Licensed Math Teachers on Student Achievement in Indiana” Poster Presentation at Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP) conference. Kansas City, Missouri.
- 2019 Hwang, NaYoung; Graff, Patrick; and Berends, Mark "A Teacher Like Me Revisited: Effects of Student-Teacher Race/ethnicity Matching on Students' Educational and Behavioral Outcomes" Paper Presentation at Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness (SREE) conference. Washington D.C.
- 2019 Hwang, NaYoung; Graff, Patrick; and Berends, Mark “Race and Ethnicity Matching and Students’ Academic and Behavioral Outcomes” Poster Presentation at American Education Research Association (AERA) conference. Toronto, CN.

- 2019 Graff, Patrick “Sociological Aspects of Decent Schools” Presentation at Academic Workshop on The Ethics of Institutions led by Clemens Sedmak. University of Notre Dame.
- 2018 Hwang, NaYoung; Graff, Patrick; and Berends, Mark "A Teacher Like Me Revisited: Effects of Student-Teacher Race/ethnicity Matching on Students' Educational and Behavioral Outcomes" Paper Presentation at Midwest Sociology of Education 2018 Conference. Ohio State University.
- 2018 Graff, Patrick. “Costs of Teacher Mobility: Impacts of Teacher Movers on Student Math Achievement in Indiana 4th-8th Grades” Paper Panel Presentation at Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP) conference. Portland, Oregon.
- 2018 Graff, Patrick. “Teacher and Principal Racial Match: Teacher Satisfaction and Turnover in Public Elementary Schools” Roundtable at American Education Research Association (AERA) conference. New York City, New York.
- 2018 Graff, Patrick and Fitzpatrick, Brian. “Left at a Crossroad: Teacher Attrition and Moving Behavior in Indiana 4th – 8th Grade Classrooms” Roundtable at American Education Research Association (AERA) conference. New York City, New York.

## **RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

---

- 2019 – 2021 *Research Assistant*, Dr. Joel Mittleman, Assistant Professor  
 - Writing a co-authored paper on the association between gun violence and student behavioral outcomes across Indiana. Quantitative analyst for a project on the impact of being young for one’s grade on student outcomes.
- 2017 – 2019 *Research Assistant*, Indiana Voucher Program Interview Follow-Up Study  
 Dr. Mark Berends, Center for Research on Educational Opportunity, University of Notre Dame  
 - Leading and organizing a continuing research project to interview over 75 Catholic and other private school principals, teachers, parents, and students whose schools have chosen to participate in the Indiana voucher program
- Fall 2016 *Research Assistant*, Dr. Megan Andrew, Center for Research on Educational Opportunity, University of Notre Dame

## **QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS - COURSEWORK**

---

Linear Regression  
Causal Inference  
Designing & Analyzing Experiments (RCTs)

Categorical Data Analysis  
R for Data Science  
Quantitative Methods Workshop

Winter 2021            Machine Learning  
                                 *Statistical Horizons*, Dr. Kevin Grimm

Summer 2020            Longitudinal Data Analysis using Structural Equation Modeling  
                                 *Statistical Horizons*, Dr. Paul Allison

Spring 2021            Structural Equation Modeling for Categorical Outcomes  
                                 *Statistical Horizons*, Dr. Kevin Grimm

Fall 2021                Regression Discontinuity Designs  
                                 *Statistical Horizons*, Dr. Rocio Titiunik

## **SERVICE**

---

2020 – 2024            **KidsPeace**, South Bend  
                                 *Board of Associates*  
                                 - Board member of a local non-profit that provides therapeutic foster care  
                                 and other services for children and their foster parents in South Bend

## **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

---

Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP)  
American Educational Research Association (AERA)