



## *LEAD THE CHANGE SERIES*

### *Q & A with AERA 2023 Presenters: Conditions Conducive to Learning that Promote Ed Change*

#### *Note from the Editor:*

Ramping up to AERA 2023, *Lead the Change* will feature the excellent presenters in the Educational Change SIG sessions. As a SIG, we are proud to present seven sessions which feature different contexts, perspectives, and methodological approaches to educational change. We asked presenters to reflect on their work and how to use our time at AERA to collectively approach the prickliest problems in education today. It was a pleasure to learn more about the exciting work happening across the globe, and I look forward to learning more at the conference. This issue features the presenters in the *Conditions Conducive to Learning that Promote Educational Change* session. See you in Chicago!

Best,  
Alex Lamb, Series Editor

#### Educational Change SIG Sessions at AERA 2023

##### **Thursday, April 13: 8:00am – 9:30am CDT**

*Critical Educational Change: Culturally Responsive Leadership and Research Trends in the Borderland Context and Beyond*

##### **Thursday, April 13: 11:40am – 1:10pm CDT**

*Networks in Educational Change: Contexts, Theories, and Practice*

##### **Saturday, April 15**

8:00am – 9:30am CDT: *Engaging Educators in Equity-Focused Change*

11:40am – 1:10pm CDT: *System Change, Well-Being, and Affect: Voices From the Ground-Up*

2:50pm – 4:20pm CDT: *Conditions Conducive to Learning that Promote Educational Change*

##### **Sunday, April 16: 11:40am – 1:10pm CDT**

*STEM and Sustainable Development Goals*

##### **Friday, May 5: 8:00am – 9:30am CDT (Virtual Session)**

*Transforming Education and Teacher Education: Technologies, Pedagogies, and Practices*



Educational Change SIG adopts an interdisciplinary and international approach to understanding many aspects of educational change, including large-scale reform, school-initiated change, school improvement, and classroom-level change.

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#### **ABOUT THE SERIES**

Lead the Change series, featuring renowned educational change experts from around the globe, serves to highlight promising research and practice, to offer expert insight on small- and large-scale educational change, and to spark collaboration within our SIG.

#### Educational Change SIG Events at AERA 2023

*All are welcome!*

##### **Friday, April 14 5: 11:40am – 1:10pm CDT**

Educational Change SIG Business Meeting

##### **Saturday, April 15 6:30pm – 8:30pm CDT**

Educational Change SIG Reception

## Examining Teacher Job Satisfaction Through Conversations with Elementary School Teachers

Jennifer R. McGee  
 Tim Huelsman  
 Terry McClannon  
*Appalachian State University*

*The 2023 AERA theme is Interrogating Consequential Education Research in Pursuit of Truth. How does your research respond to this call?*

In his statement on the theme for this year's conference, H. Richard Milner, IV, current President of AERA, calls for educational researchers to be leaders in conducting research that has the "potential to improve the human condition." Our work intends to do just that by focusing on the work of the teacher and the conditions under which they conduct that work. We believe that the teacher is fundamental to the success of public education and that by striving to improve the quality of their working conditions, we can improve the learning experience for students.

The research we will present at this year's AERA Annual Meeting focuses on teacher job satisfaction, but our larger body of work is centered on empirical investigation into the school as a workplace and the teacher as an employee, and how the interplay between teaching as a "calling" and teaching as a "job" influences teacher working conditions.

One of the issues in public Bk-12 education that is getting a lot of attention is teacher retention. Teacher shortages are prevalent and pervasive. The rate of teacher turnover is increasing each year in our state after what was many years of a stable rate of turnover. This is a nationwide trend. Now more than ever, and especially following the COVID-19 pandemic, we should be producing empirical research that supports ways to enhance the working

conditions of the teacher as we know this leads to positive outcomes for students and communities.

*What are some of the ideas you hope the field of Educational Change and the audience at AERA can learn from your work related to practice, policy, and scholarship?*

Our work centers on the working conditions of public school (BK-12) teachers. As employees of state and local governments, teachers are directly impacted by educational policy. Policy decisions can impact the classroom, the school, and the public's view of education as a whole. Our data from multiple studies shows that this influences teacher job satisfaction and burnout, which we believe ultimately has an impact on retention. It is of course difficult to prove this empirically.

*"The teacher is fundamental to the success of public education."*

None of this is new information to members of AERA. What might be nuanced in our study is that we examined job satisfaction qualitatively, instead of relying on instrumentation. This particular study does

have a smaller sample size, but what we found is that teachers were able to share both positive and negative factors that influence their satisfaction. We believe that this leads to the examination of teacher job satisfaction on a continuum instead of a dichotomy. We would urge the field to consider this as we continue to see large numbers of teachers leaving the profession altogether. Our data show that teachers can be satisfied with some parts of their jobs but dissatisfied with others. We feel that our duty is to highlight and elevate the voices of those teachers who are telling us what could be better about their jobs and try to make changes both with policy from the top and logistics within school buildings.

We are excited to be presenting in the Educational Change SIG because we believe that this is the right group to begin having conversations about how to make the lives of

teachers better. As educational researchers, we often have ideas about what might work but need to be able to test and evaluate those ideas.

*What excites you about the direction of the field of Educational Change, and how might we share and develop those ideas at AERA 2023?*

The only thing constant in education is change. To us, the field of educational change is the right home for work that we hope will spur conversations around how to do things differently in education. Educational research stems from many places and connects many disparate disciplines and theoretical perspectives. We often, however, ignore other fields of study that might have something to teach us.

Our work is grounded in Industrial-Organizational Psychology, a field with a deep history. We find the interdisciplinary approach to our work exciting as it allows for new perspectives. Sometimes as researchers and practitioners we accidentally cherry pick the ideas that we prefer, that feel more comfortable, or familiar over nuanced ideas and perspectives that might have better outcomes. The field of educational change seems to put a name to the idea of embracing new concepts, theories, and planning for better approaches to enacting change. We think that's an exciting place to go with empirical education research and are proud to be involved in the 2023 Educational Change SIG program.



Dr. Jennifer McGee is an Associate Professor of Educational Research and Evaluation at Appalachian State University. Her research interests include teacher working conditions, STEM education, and classroom assessment.



Dr. Tim Hueslman is a Professor of Psychology and Director of the Industrial-Organizational Human Resource Management Master's program at Appalachian State University. His professional interests are broad and include personality and mood in the organization, organizational assessment, and organizational culture and climate.



Dr. Terry McClannon is Professor of Instructional Technology and Associate Dean of the Reich College of Education. His current research scholarship includes the exploration of the use of 3D virtual learning environments to improve teaching and learning, Universal Design for Learning, and technology use to improve student engagement.

## Leading through Crisis: School Leadership and Professional Capital During COVID-19

Chanteliese Watson, *Michigan State University*  
Corrie Stone-Johnson, *University of Buffalo*  
Sheneka Williams, *Michigan State University*

*The 2023 AERA theme is Interrogating Consequential Education Research in Pursuit of Truth. How does your research respond to this call?*

Our study builds on earlier work from Andy Hargreaves, the founder of AERA's Educational Change SIG, that defines professional capital in school contexts. Our work narrows in on one of the less-described aspects of professional capital, decisional capital. Our project encompasses this year's theme by considering how decisional capital serves as a lens to view teaching and learning in three of the nation's largest states during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, California, Texas, and New York.

We know that professional capital is associated with needed improvements in schools: a focus on teachers leading learning (Campbell et al., 2016), a more nimble response to change (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2020), and a more nuanced attention to context (Shirley, 2016). Even so, we know little about how decision-making factors into professional capital: what features of leadership enable principals to make decisions that improve outcomes for students and teachers? What barriers inhibit decision-making? If schools are attempting numerous or simultaneous changes—as was the case during the pandemic—how do leaders prioritize and garner support for their plans? Our study seeks to deepen knowledge about how school leaders leverage decisional capital broadly, and specifically in times of crisis. While our study examines school leadership during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, findings from our study might be transferable to the study of

educational leadership in other crises by highlighting universal truths about how school leaders, formal and informal, create change and use their influence to make decisions that shape their school communities.

*What are some of the ideas you hope the field of Educational Change and the audience at AERA can learn from your work related to practice, policy, and scholarship?*

Findings from our study have important implications for school leaders who want to cultivate more professional capital in their schools. Undergirding our study is the relatively underexplored concept of professional capital. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) describe professional capital as an “investment” that “requires teachers to be highly committed, thoroughly prepared,

*“Professional capital may not be a static concept but rather a fluid one.”*

continuously developed, properly paid, well networked with each other to maximize their own involvement, and able to make effective judgments using all their capabilities and experience” (p. 3).

Professional capital includes a mix of three other capitals: human capital, or “the talent of individuals”; social capital, “the collaborative power of the group”; and decisional capital, “the wisdom and expertise to make sound judgments about learners that are cultivated over many years” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013, p. 37).

Our findings suggest that professional capital may not be a static concept but rather a fluid one. Understanding the fluid nature of professional capital can lead to strengthening its core components (human, social, and decisional capital), which are associated with better outcomes for schools. Our focus in this paper is on decisional capital, as the pandemic paradoxically allowed leaders to make many decisions about teaching, learning, and communication that are typically more centralized.

We also found that while many schools demonstrate “high” professional capital, they frequently differed in terms of how the three forms of capital were operationalized. For example, one school might have high social and high human capital but low decisional capital, and another might have low social and high human and decisional capital. With our ranking system, these schools rated the same but clearly differ in terms of how capital is operationalized. As such, our findings are somewhat counterintuitive; school leaders may not need to strive simply to increase social capital and create more collaborative relationships between school employees and others working in the education system, for example, in order to strengthen professional capital, but rather to understand what challenges their schools face and which forms of capital will help them reach their goals by devoting more time and resources to these efforts. In continuing with our above example, instead of strengthening its social capital with more relationships, the school may need to focus on strengthening its decisional capital by increasing communication with parents and teachers to provide uniformed school operations. By using the AERA annual meeting as a stage to introduce the importance of identifying professional capital at work in the school context, researchers and practitioners can work together to address these questions and strengthen the bridge between scholarship and practice.

*What excites you about the direction of the field of Educational Change, and how might we share and develop those ideas at AERA 2023?*

The pandemic has provided a space for innovation in schools, pushing schools to speed up the timeline for innovation and advancement. When in-person interactions were no longer possible, the education sector was forced to update modalities and rely on professional capital to connect the various participants using technological advancements. Schools used internal and external professional development to increase the computer literacy of their staff members (human capital), looked to colleagues across their districts, and throughout the country for

inspiration to learn how to best implement digital learning (social capital), and created policies to govern how students would be instructed and graded until it was safe to return to learning in-person (decisional capital). With these newly emphasized resources and skills, educators can intentionally reach more students, teachers, and leaders via the internet. This invites more room for collaboration and the exchange of ideas to continue the fight for lasting school improvement.

*“There is room to increase human capital in schools through targeted professional development and leadership training.”*

If we see this analysis of professional capital as an area for growth for some schools rather than as a deficit, we can continue to make improvements for the benefit of students and teachers in schools across the country. There is room to increase human capital in schools through targeted professional development and leadership training. Organization-wide reflection and academic research analysis can help districts advance their decisional capital and the systemic trust that ensues from improved communication. More concrete decisions from the top help everyone else in the organization do their jobs more effectively and create a unified message for all education stakeholders. The pandemic has helped educators learn and relearn the necessity of interdependence between the educational community using existing relationships. This includes educators on the local, state, and national level as well as community partners who played a vital part in providing services to the whole child during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is our hope that we can broaden the research base on professional capital here at AERA. Other projects focusing on social capital,

human capital, and decisional capital would add to our collective knowledge about how to make meaningful change in schools. AERA allows us to gather with scholars and practitioners who engage in this work.

### References:

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- Shirley, D. (2016). Three forms of professional capital: systemic, social movement, and activist. *Journal of Professional Capital and Community*, 1(4), 302–320. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jpcc-08-2016-0020>



Chanteliese Watson is a dual PhD student studying Education Policy and K-12 Educational Administration at Michigan State University. Her research interests include adult social and emotional learning, school leadership, teacher retention, and policy implementation.



Dr. Corrie Stone-Johnson is an Associate Professor of Educational Administration at the University of Buffalo, Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Educational Change*, and author of the book, *Generational Identity, Educational Change, and School Leadership*. Her research in educational change and leadership focuses on understanding the social contexts and organizational cultures within which teachers, leaders, and school support staff experience change.



Dr. Sheneka Williams is Professor and Chairperson of the Department of Educational Administration at Michigan State University. Her research focuses on education policy and educational leadership, primarily in rural contexts.

## **New Child Protection Mandatory Reporting Requirements for Irish Teachers: Implementation Challenges and Barriers**

Dr. Mia Treacy  
Dr. Margaret Nohilly  
*Mary Immaculate College,  
University of Limerick*

*The 2023 AERA theme is Interrogating Consequential Education Research in Pursuit of Truth. How does your research respond to this call?*

Grounded in the practice of schools, and in particular, how schools respond when implementing new statutory requirements, our research centers on issues that impact the daily working lives of Irish primary school teachers. Irish primary schools typically educate children from the ages of 4 to twelve. Teachers are in a unique position to support child protection work because outside of the home, children spend the majority of their time in school. Consequently, teachers have a unique insight into the children they teach. Our work focuses on consequential educational research in that it highlights the implementation challenges and barriers faced by teachers when faced with mandatory educational change. Additionally, the ultimate intended beneficiaries of our research are children, specifically, children who have experienced or at risk of child abuse or neglect. Schools being a microcosm of society, pursuing truth in such a challenging but pivotal facet of children's lives provides an authenticity and gravitas to our research.

Mandatory reporting for suspected child abuse was enacted in Ireland in December 2017 through the full implementation of the Children First Act 2015. This legislation places statutory obligations on providers of services to children including all schools, to prepare a child safeguarding statement, in addition to a requirement for certain persons, defined in the legislation as “mandated persons”, to make reports in certain circumstances to the state agency with responsibility for child protection and welfare. Registered teachers are named as mandated persons in the legislation, and so for

the first time, Irish teachers now have a mandatory reporting obligation in relation to child abuse. Pursuant to section 14, teachers must report any knowledge, belief or suspicion of actual child abuse, or the risk of child abuse. Additionally, pursuant to section 16, teachers must assist the state agency with assessments, when requested to do so, including the provision of verbal or written information or reports; attendance at meetings; and the production of “any document or thing”.

The Irish Department of Education procedures (2017) which are intended to provide guidance to schools in meeting these new statutory obligations, stipulate that a “relevant person” should be the school’s designated liaison person (DLP) for child protection. The purpose of our research was to ascertain the

*“Mandated systemic change needs to be accompanied by thoughtful, incremental, practical support for teachers.”*

experiences of such DLPs in Irish primary schools at a unique point in time at which teachers and schools embark on this new statutory-butressed child protection journey. Consequently, our research has practical meaning for teachers and children in Irish primary schools but can also offer insight to an international audience in relation to systemic educational change.

*What are some of the ideas you hope the field of Educational Change and the audience at AERA can learn from your work related to practice, policy, and scholarship?*

We hope that our research can reinforce the need for mandated systemic change to be accompanied by thoughtful, incremental, practical support for teachers, if such educational policy change is to be implemented

as intended at a practical level in a school context. Specifically, we hope that our research can dispel the myth that a linear relationship exists between the existence of mandated reporting requirements, even when underpinned by legislation, and teachers' actual reporting of child protection concerns. Whilst protocols and procedures, including mandated reporting, assist in streamlining processes and promote standardisation, there is little evidence to suggest that such initiatives in isolation result in increased numbers of children being protected from harm. Any such initiative requires tangible supports including targeted training and mentoring because we know from research that reporting child abuse is a complex process for teachers. Worryingly, there is also international research highlighting teachers' under-reporting of child protection concerns. Several factors have been found in research to influence reporting of child protection concerns including reporter knowledge; reporter fears and concerns; reporter belief systems; specific case characteristics; compassion fatigue; inadequate training; and secondary traumatic stress.

This research is important because it reports on the experiences of Irish primary schools at a unique point in time, a time in which teachers must adhere to mandatory reporting obligations for child abuse and neglect for the first time. However, this research highlights the many implementation challenges and barriers that teachers face in fulfilling their statutory obligations including DLPs' unfamiliarity with the procedures, and their dissatisfaction with the training for their role; low levels of teacher preparedness for the mandated reporting role; teacher concerns about the consequences of reporting; and a dearth in quality teacher education. It is recommended that such educational change be

*“We are excited by opportunities...which allow researchers and policy makers to interact, collaborate with, and learn from each other in multiple online fora.”*

supported by quality, sustained support for teachers including improved teacher education that provide opportunities for in-person interaction and meaningful participation.

*What excites you about the direction of the field of Educational Change, and how might we share and develop those ideas at AERA 2023?*

A number of developments excite us about the field of Educational Change. First, we are excited by the emergence of empirically-based theoretical frameworks in the field of Educational Change which aim to assist our understanding of the complexity of the change process. We believe that such frameworks can

assist in understanding and conceptualising the processes that underpin educational change.

Analysing these processes in addition to mapping educational change on to them can deepen and broaden our understanding of effective and sustainable educational change.

Second, we are excited by the opportunities that are present, arising from the Covid 19 pandemic, which allow researchers and policy makers to

interact, collaborate with, and learn from each other in multiple online fora. We believe that such fora can provide easier, and more efficient, access to like-minded researchers.

Third, the field of Educational Change provides us with a real and tangible opportunity to adopt an interdisciplinary and international approach to supporting and developing aspects of educational change. We are excited about the prospects that may become available in the field of child protection to develop links with colleagues across the globe in this area and to learn from the developments in child protection from other countries, particularly, in relation to the diverse experiences of implementation of mandatory reporting in other countries. Child protection underpins



almost every facet of school life in that children's safety and protection needs must be met in a meaningful way in order for children to have the capacity to learn, and to gain optimum benefit, from their educational setting. Therefore, the opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration with other policy areas in school, and in the field of education, are vast. We are very excited about exploring, harnessing, and developing these opportunities.

We believe that AERA 2023 in Chicago provides a unique opportunity for renewed sharing of such ideas, innovations, and initiatives in a post-pandemic, interactive, collaborative, in-person environment.



Dr Mia Treacy is an Assistant Professor in Educational Policy at Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland. She teaches Educational Policy to pre-service primary (elementary) school teachers in Ireland. She is a former primary school teacher, school principal, and teacher in-service educator whose main research areas include child protection, and educational law.



Dr Margaret Nohilly is an Assistant Professor in Social, Personal and Health Education and Wellbeing at Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland. She teaches Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Wellbeing to pre-service primary (elementary) school teachers in Ireland. She is a former primary school teacher and teacher in-service educator whose main research areas include child protection, wellbeing and SPHE.

## Systematic Review of Leadership for Deeper Learning

Jayson W. Richardson  
Sahar Khawaja  
*University of Denver*

*The 2023 AERA theme is Interrogating Consequential Education Research in Pursuit of Truth. How does your research respond to this call?*

Our research focuses on systematically understanding the literature around leading schools for deeper learning. Deeper learning environments are ones that empower students, teachers, leaders, and the community. For too long the US has predominantly looked at education as a series of credits that must be completed to be considered ready for higher education or the workforce. By understanding

*“Deeper learning schools are all about educational change.”*

the research on leading for deeper learning, we are uncovering truths about leading alternative models of schooling that fundamentally changes the student experience.

*What are some of the ideas you hope the field of Educational Change and the audience at AERA can learn from your work related to practice, policy, and scholarship?*

The hope is that the audience will better understand the current body of literature around leading schools for deeper learning which involves giving kids more choice, voice, and agency and initiating systemic changes like project-based learning, competency-based assessments, internship, and graduate profiles. Given that the literature body is not that robust, we hope that the audience will be inspired to pursue new lines of inquiry that focus on inspiring the field around leading schools for deeper learning.

*What excites you about the direction of the field of Educational Change, and how might we share and develop those ideas at AERA 2023?*

Deeper learning schools are all about educational change; be that around student voice, student autonomy, graduate profiles, competency-based education, internships, dual-enrollment, community service, personalized education, problem-based education, or maker spaces (to name but a few). These changes require a reboot of how researcher and practitioners think about school leadership. Rethinking the possibilities of k-12 education ignites many new avenues for future research that will impact theory and practice.



Jayson W. Richardson, PhD is a professor and department chair at the University of Denver. He is passionate about increasing the research base on leading schools for deeper learning.



Sahar Khawaja, is a PhD doctoral candidate and graduate research assistant in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Denver. She is interested in researching how educators can make schools more inclusive of Muslim students' needs, and the challenges Muslim students face in U.S. schools because of their religious identity.