

Leading for impact: How can PEER engagement impact MNPS?

December 16, 2024

In Fall 2024, members from all of PEER's cross-institutional working groups and rapid response study teams came together to learn and collaborate with one another and action plan for the upcoming year and beyond. Focusing on both short and long-term impacts, each group spent time workshopping how they can best design their studies and position their findings through strategic engagement with key MNPS constituents to create positive, evidence-based changes in the district and in schools that advance more equitable outcomes for students across Nashville. Team members reviewed MNPS's "theory of action" for the current school year, growing their understanding of how MNPS seeks to improve outcomes at scale across all schools, and reflected on how our approach to research may continue to evolve to support this work. In addition to the working group members, many MNPS Chiefs were in attendance to learn alongside the research teams.

PEER Research Impact Statements

The anchor of each team's action planning began with crafting impact statements - or vision statements that reflect the ultimate impact each research team hopes to have through engaging in partnership research within their priority area.

Postsecondary Readiness Working Group

The Postsecondary Readiness Working Group works across two different teams - one that analyzes longitudinal MNPS data to understand trends in EPSO participation, completion, and success, and another that works directly with three partner high schools to co-design and test interventions for improving student access and participation in EPSOs.

Through both research strands, the partners in these groups hope to:

- Improve equitable participation, completion, and success in high-quality early postsecondary opportunities in order to promote successful student transitions to college and career.

Student Absenteeism Working Group

Reducing chronic absenteeism rates across the district by achieving a systematic understanding of barriers to attendance for students and implementation challenges for schools.

Educational Equity Ecosystem Working Group

Articulate a framework for aligned and jointly accountable city-wide systems that ensure more equitable outcomes for all students and make recommendations about what is and isn't working within the current systems.

Supporting Educators Working Group

Improve student outcomes and reduce variability in teacher practice in mathematics through coherent and effective instructional supports and leadership practices.

Tiered Interventions Rapid Response Team

Maximize the effects of MNPS' tiered intervention programs to accelerate student growth across the district.

Strategic Engagement through PEER

Research conducted through PEER is unique because members of PEER working groups and rapid response teams collaboratively engage and are intentionally supported throughout a research cycle that includes four phases: 1) identify specific problems of practice, 2) develop research questions and design studies, 3) conduct research and make sense of findings, and 4) develop recommendations for policy and practice. Research findings are then distributed through briefs on the PEER website, at Cabinet study sessions where PEER teams present to MNPS leadership, at PEER-coordinated events. PEER findings are also used to engage in co-design research with schools to ensure the work is impactful.

Over the next year, the research teams will work to meaningfully engage all constituent groups—students, teachers, administrators, counselors, district leaders, community members, and families-- at different points in the research process and in ways that they hope will lead to greater take up of



Partnership for Educational Equity Research

their findings and lasting changes that make real differences for kids across the district.