

EDUC 271: Education Policy in the United States

Spring 2021

Fridays 8:30-11:20am PT (Virtual)

INSTRUCTORS

Jon Valant

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office hours: Thursdays 1-2pm (or by appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

Education policy in the United States is complex and consequential. On any given day, a student might use curricular materials chosen by district officials to teach content standards defined by a state legislature to align with assessments required by federal law. This mix of actors and institutions complicates the study of education policy and the politics that shape it. However, the policies these actors create have profound consequences for the type of society we have and opportunities available within it.

This course is designed to introduce the major policies that define the U.S. education system. It will focus primarily on issues in K-12 education, such as school finance, school choice, and desegregation. It will consider issues in early childhood education and higher education as well, along with policies outside of education that nonetheless shape students' experiences and opportunities. We will study the theories underlying major education policies and the all-too-common gap between how policies sound in theory and work in practice. In doing so, we will explore how and why education policy so often exacerbates, rather than reduces, inequalities by race and class.

The topic is broad and the quarter is short, so we cannot do justice to all of these topics. Our foremost goals are to better understand the defining policies of today—and potentially tomorrow—while thinking about which, and whose, goals these policies serve. The course is intended primarily for PhD students. We will read and analyze research on education policy and get practice in the exercise of identifying important questions in education policy that are potentially answerable via research. Students will be encouraged to think creatively about how they, themselves, might design research to answer these questions. However, the course is open to those interested in education policy but not necessarily education policy research, with flexibility in course assignments. More generally, the intention is to encourage students to delve into the topics of greatest interest to them in ways that best suit their needs.

GRADES / ASSIGNMENTS

Course grades will be determined as follows:

Participation:	30%
Memos:	40%
Final presentation:	10%
Final proposal:	20%

Note: As excited as we are about this course, our first priority is your well-being, and we understand that this is a difficult time. If you are experiencing any challenges that affect your work in this course, please let us know. We don't need details or documentation, and we will work with you to develop alternatives to ensure you are still able to learn from the course. Additionally, if you are experiencing challenges more generally, we're happy to serve as a point of contact to connect you with resources to support you.

Participation (30%)

This is a course in which what you (and your colleagues) put into it will determine what you (and you colleagues) get out of it. Active participation is essential.

We expect students to attend all class meetings. If you cannot make it to class, please notify us in advance so that we can plan accordingly. We also expect students to keep up with course readings and assignments, actively engage in course discussions, actively listen to classmates, and ask questions of guest speakers. Readings should be completed before the class for which they are assigned (e.g., Week 2 readings should be read before the Week 2 class). Keeping up with readings will entail not just reading the assigned texts but also paying attention to news in education policy/politics throughout the quarter. This is a lively, important time for education policy, and we will weave current events into the fabric of the course. Although we will not assign any particular news-related reading, we encourage you to regularly check outlets like *EdWeek*, *Chalkbeat*, *The New York Times*, and NPR Education; think critically about what is happening; and come prepared to discuss it.

We hope that you will accept our invitations to meet to discuss your work and your thoughts about education policy, politics, and research. We hope, too, that when you are able, you will engage in course discussions with your camera on, ready and willing to jump into conversations. Our meetings will be much more discussion-based than lecture-based, and we would like to replicate an in-person experience to the extent it is possible. We understand, however, that you can't always have cameras on—and that Zoom fatigue is real, especially in a three-hour class.

Memos (40%)

You are required to submit four memos during the quarter. Each memo will be based on the topic covered in the prior class, with memos due by the Thursday night before the next class. For example, memos on issues related to school choice are due by 11:59pm on April 22. All memos should be between 500 and 1,000 words in length (excluding references, if you have them). Please submit memos in Canvas as Word documents.

These memos will take two forms: research memos and policy memos. You can choose the balance of these memo types (one research and three policy, four research, etc.). Students pursuing research careers are encouraged to submit at least 2-3 research memos.

- For a research memo, you will identify an important issue related to that week’s policy topic—one that is potentially answerable as a research question—and propose an approach to studying that issue. We are open to different methodologies, including both quantitative (descriptive or causal) and qualitative approaches. We will provide information about various datasets (e.g., codebooks from student-level administrative data) to help with identifying realistic approaches. We see these memos as creative exercises that encourage you to think critically about an issue—even if it’s not in your primary area of study—and assess how you, as a researcher, might help to improve our understanding of that issue. Research memos should describe: (1) the issue you are examining and why you have chosen that issue (e.g., how your proposed work could inform and improve policy); (2) the proposed methodology for studying that policy; and (3) challenges and limitations you envision if you were to pursue this as a study. The proposed methodology does not need to be extremely detailed (e.g., equations are welcome but not necessary) but should contain enough detail that we can assess its feasibility and potential for improving our understanding of an important policy issue.

If you wish, you can revise and resubmit a research memo (not a policy memo), and we will use the better of the two grades. Revisions are due within one week from the time we send our initial comments back to you.

- For a policy memo, you will identify and analyze a specific local, state, or federal policy—or proposed policy—related to that week’s topic. For example, you could examine the Biden administration’s “free community college” proposal when we study higher education, or a Boston Public Schools proposal to change exam schools’ admissions process when we study school integration. Policy memos are written to policymakers who might consider action on the policy, and they should be structured and formatted in a way that concisely communicates the key information the policymaker should know. Policy memos should describe: (1) basic information about the policy/proposal; (2) the likely goals of the policy; (3) the underlying logic for how the policy might achieve those goals; (4) potential problems or tradeoffs involved (e.g., gaps in the underlying logic or weaknesses in how this particular policy is constructed); (5) how we should measure/assess how well the policy, if enacted, achieves its goals; and (6) your assessment of the likely effects of the policy. If you would like to speak briefly about the likely politics surrounding the issue (e.g., about interest groups that might engage on the issue), you may, but the memo’s primary focus should be to analyze the policy itself.

Final presentation (10%)

In lieu of a final exam, you will produce a final proposal (see below). We will devote the last course meeting—and, if necessary, part of the second-to-last course meeting—to presentations in which you present your work to your peers in order to receive feedback before finishing your final proposal.

These presentations will be structured like a (virtual) academic conference. Before presenting, you will share your slides (and, if you’d like, a draft of your proposal) with the classmate we have assigned as your presentation discussant. You will then present these slides to the full group (approximately 5-6 minutes). Discussants have a minute or two to respond to the presentation and ask the first question of the presenter, before opening to a brief Q&A session with the full group. The content of the final presentation will depend on whether you opt for a research proposal or policy proposal. You may wish to incorporate feedback you receive during the presentation into your final proposal, but there is, of course, no obligation to do so.

Final proposal (20%)

You may choose whether to submit a final research proposal or a final policy proposal. We anticipate that most students pursuing research degrees/careers will opt for the research proposal, but this is up to you. The final proposal should be approximately 3,000-3,500 words long (excluding bibliography). For students who are **not graduating** this year, final proposals are due on Thursday, June 10 (uploaded to Canvas as a Word document by 11:59pm). For students who **are graduating** this year—for whom grades are due earlier—final proposals are due on Monday, June 7 (uploaded by 11:59pm).

A *research proposal* is essentially an extended, more formal research memo. It proposes research on a policy or practice related to one of the topics we have studied in this course. A research proposal should contain an introduction that describes the motivation for the proposed research (i.e., why its results will produce information that could meaningfully improve education policy or practice). It should contain a concise literature review that assesses what gaps remain in the research and helps to define your potential contribution and research question. It should describe the data you would use. (If you don't currently have access to those data, that's okay, but keep this realistic.) It should describe the methods you propose for examining the issue. And, finally, it should include a discussion section that assesses, honestly, what challenges you imagine and how you would critique your own work. You do not need to conduct any analyses or data collection—only propose them. While we will evaluate research proposals partly on whether the methodology is appropriate for the research question, methodological complexity for the sake of methodological complexity is not desirable. Much more important is identifying an issue that requires, and is amenable to, further research for the sake of improving educational outcomes. In addition, this proposal should reflect new thinking and work during this quarter (e.g., please do not repurpose part of your already-written dissertation). A good (but not necessary) outcome for the final research proposal is that you have a roadmap and start for a future paper.

A *policy proposal* is an attempt to draw together work from inside and outside of this course to design an education policy that you would be willing to propose to a local, state, or federal policymaker. The topic should relate to one of the topics we study in class, and the proposed policy should be “data-informed but values-driven.” A policy proposal will need to define the problem or issue being addressed as well as the policy being proposed. It will describe the goals of the proposed policy and the values underlying those goals. It will contain a conceptual framework that describes the logic by which the proposed policy would produce the desired outcomes. It should include a literature review that describes relevant research, but this review should focus on what the research can and cannot tell us about this particular proposal. It should also describe how the policymaker would evaluate the success of this policy, if implemented. Importantly, too, a policy proposal should realistically describe potential challenges, tradeoffs, flaws, and unintended consequences. It should conclude with an assessment of how this policy should be implemented in order to produce your desired outcomes.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are responsible for understanding and adhering to [the University's Honor Code policy](#). This includes properly acknowledging ideas and work that are not your own. You may (in fact, are encouraged to!) talk with colleagues about ideas you have for your memos and proposals. However, you should write these memos and proposals independently and ensure that the submitted materials reflect your own work, thinking, and writing.

And, of course, we expect students to treat one another respectfully.

PRIVACY STATEMENT

As described by the University's [recording and broadcasting courses policy](#), you may not record class meetings without prior permission from the instructor. If granted permission, or if the teaching team posts videos, students may keep recordings only for personal use and may not post recordings on the Internet, or otherwise distribute them. These policies protect the privacy rights of instructors and students, and the intellectual property and other rights of the university. Students who need lectures recorded for the purposes of an academic accommodation should contact the [Office of Accessible Education](#).

COURSE SCHEDULE & STRUCTURE

We will examine a different topic each week. The pages that follow show the weekly topics, assigned readings, and guest speakers. **Please note that we will be updating the syllabus as the course progresses.** This is so we can adapt our plans according to (a) education policy news that arises during the quarter and (b) what we learn, as we go, about works best for this (new) course. **The reading list will be finalized at least one week before a class period, so please check the syllabus accordingly.** The updated syllabus and readings will be available on Canvas.

Also, please remember to keep an eye on the news (see “Participation” section above). We will try to allow time each week to talk about any notable events in education policy/politics.

WEEK 1 (4/2)—Course Introduction / The Goals of Education Policymaking

Readings (to be read in class):

Brighthouse, H., Ladd, H., Loeb, S., & Swift, A. (2018). Good education policy making: Data-informed but values-driven. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 100(4), 36-39.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in US schools. *Educational Researcher*, 35(7), 3-12.

WEEK 2 (4/9)—Accountability & Standards-Based Reforms

Guest speakers: Sade Bonilla (UMass Amherst) & Jim Soland (University of Virginia)

Readings:

Papers / Chapters / Reports

Figlio, D. N., & Loeb, S. (2011). School accountability. In E. A. Hanushek, S. Machin, & L. Woessmann (Eds.), *Handbook of the Economics of Education* (Vol. 3, pp. 383–421). North-Holland, The Netherlands: Elsevier.

Rouse, C. E., Hannaway, J., Goldhaber, D., & Figlio, D. (2013). Feeling the Florida heat? How low-performing schools respond to voucher and accountability pressure. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 5(2), 251-81.

Duckworth, A. L., & Yeager, D. S. (2015). Measurement matters: Assessing personal qualities other than cognitive ability for educational purposes. *Educational Researcher*, 44(4), 237-251.

Short articles / Audio

Dee, T. S., & Jacob, B. A. (2010). Evaluating NCLB: Accountability has produced substantial gains in math skills but not in reading. *Education Next*, 10(3), 54-62.
[Note: This is a short *EdNext* article based on their longer JPAM paper.]

Valant, J. (2020). Good schools for a troubled democracy. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 102(3), 28-31.

Klein, A. (2016, March 31). The Every Student Succeeds Act: An ESSA overview. *Education Week*.
<https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/the-every-student-succeeds-act-an-essa-overview/2016/03>
[Watch video and/or read article.]

Gewertz, C. (2015, September 2015). The Common Core explained. *Education Week*.
<https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/the-common-core-explained/2015/09>
[Watch video and/or read article.]

Andrew Ho's Harvard EdCast episode on student testing, accountability, and COVID.
<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/21/03/harvard-edcast-student-testing-accountability-and-covid>
[Listen to podcast or read transcript.]

WEEK 3 (4/16)—School Choice

Guest speakers: Huriya Jabbar (UT Austin) & Amanda Lu (Stanford)

Readings:

Papers / Chapters / Reports

Friedman, M. (1955). The role of government in education. In R. A. Solo (Ed.), *Economics and the Public Interest*. Rutgers University Press.

<https://la.utexas.edu/users/hcleaver/330T/350kPEEFriedmanRoleOfGovttable.pdf>

Loeb, S., & Valant, J. (2020). Economic perspectives on school choice. In M. Berends, A. Primus, & M. Springer (Eds.), *Handbook of research on school choice, 2nd edition* (pp. 3-16). New York, NY: Routledge.

CREDO (2013). *National charter school study—Full report*.

https://credo.stanford.edu/sites/g/files/sbiybj6481/f/ncss_2013_final_draft.pdf

[Skim but pay attention to methods]

Pearman, F. A., & Swain, W. A. (2017). School choice, gentrification, and the variable significance of racial stratification in urban neighborhoods. *Sociology of Education*, 90(3), 213-235.

Short articles / Audio

Eve Ewing's "Big Brains" podcast episode: Lessons from our country's largest school closing with Eve L. Ewing. <https://news.uchicago.edu/podcasts/big-brains/lessons-countrys-largest-school-closing>
[Listen to interview or read transcript. If interested, see Ewing's book, *Ghosts in the Schoolyard*.]

Dynarski, M., & Nichols, A. (2017). More findings about school vouchers and test scores, and they are still negative. Brookings Evidence Speaks Reports, 2(18).

https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/ccf_20170713_mdynarski_evidence_speaks1.pdf

Quinn, R. (2021, March 31). WV governor approves what advocates say is the nation's broadest non-public school vouchers program. The Herald-Dispatch.

https://www.herald-dispatch.com/news/putnam_news/wv-governor-approves-what-advocates-say-is-the-nation-s-broadest-non-public-school-vouchers/article_a40e6823-0879-56b2-b35d-db379bfeb9ee.html

WEEK 4 (4/23)—Desegregation

Guest speakers: Alvin Pearman (Stanford) & Ericka Weathers (Penn State)

Readings:

Papers / Chapters / Reports

Frankenberg, E., Ee, J., Ayscue, J. B., & Orfield, G. (2019). *Harming our common future: America's segregated schools 65 years after Brown*. The Civil Rights Project at UCLA.
<https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/harming-our-common-future-americas-segregated-schools-65-years-after-brown>

Reardon, S.F., Weathers, E.S., Fahle, E.M., Jang, H., & Kalogrides, D. (2019). Is Separate Still Unequal? New Evidence on School Segregation and Racial Academic Achievement Gaps. Stanford CEPA Working Paper No. 19-06.
<https://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/wp19-06-v092019.pdf>

Short articles / Audio

Kahlenberg, R. D., Potter, H., & Quick, K. (2019). *A bold agenda for school integration*. The Century Foundation. <https://tcf.org/content/report/bold-agenda-school-integration/>

Berkeley Talks: Professor Rucker Johnson on why school integration works
<https://news.berkeley.edu/2019/04/17/berkeley-talks-rucker-johnson-school-integration/>
 [This is video of an interview. If you'd prefer/like to read Johnson's empirical paper on the effects of desegregation, see [here](#). If you'd prefer/like to read his book, see [here](#).]

McLaren, M. (2021, February 3). Louisville's desegregation myth: How a busing plan hurt Black communities it aimed to help. *Louisville Courier Journal*.
<https://www.courier-journal.com/in-depth/news/education/2021/02/03/louisville-public-schools-desegregation-plan-played-favorites-to-white-students/6042215002/>

NPR's Fresh Air: A 'forgotten history' of how the U.S. government segregated America.
<https://www.npr.org/2017/05/03/526655831/a-forgotten-history-of-how-the-u-s-government-segregated-america>
 [Listen to interview and/or read summary. If interested, see Rothstein's book, *The Color of Law*.]

Chang, A. (2018, August 27). We can draw school zones to make classrooms less segregated. This is how well your district does. Vox.
<https://www.vox.com/2018/1/8/16822374/school-segregation-gerrymander-map>
 [A Vox article based on a paper by Tomás Monarrez ([full paper here](#))]

WEEK 5 (4/30)—School Finance

Guest speakers: Chris Candelaria (Vanderbilt) & Kenneth Shores (University of Delaware)

Readings:

Papers / Chapters / Reports

Congressional Research Service. (2019). *State and local financing of public schools*. CRS Report R45827. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R45827>

Jackson, C. K. (2018). *Does school spending matter? The new literature on an old question*. NBER Working Paper 25368. https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w25368/w25368.pdf

Jackson, C. K., & Mackevicius, C. (2021). *The distribution of school spending impacts*. NBER Working Paper 28517. <http://www.nber.org/papers/w28517>

Short articles / Audio

Blad, E. (2020, January 10). Why the feds still fall short on special education funding. *Education Week*. <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/why-the-feds-still-fall-short-on-special-education-funding/2020/01>

Gordon, N. E., & West, M. W. (2016). Federal school finance policy. In M. Hansen & J. Valant (Eds.), *Memos to the President on the Future of U.S. Education Policy*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2016/12/08/memo-federal-school-finance-policy/>

Barnum, M., & Belsha, K. (2021, March 25). Unprecedented federal funding is on the way. High-poverty schools are starting to reckon with how to spend it. Chalkbeat. <https://www.chalkbeat.org/2021/3/25/22350474/unprecedented-federal-funding-high-poverty-schools-how-spend>

Koedel, C. (2019, May 3). California's pension debt is harming teachers and students now—and it's going to get worse. Brookings Brown Center Chalkboard. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2019/05/03/californias-pension-debt-is-harming-teachers-and-students-now-and-its-going-to-get-worse/>

Browse Edunomics Lab website (<https://edunomicslab.org/>), including page about National Education Resource Database on Schools (NERD\$) (<https://edunomicslab.org/our-research/financial-transparency/>).

WEEK 6 (5/7)—Teachers & Staffing (Kaylee to lead lecture & discussion)

Guest speakers: Katharine Strunk (Michigan State) & Eric Taylor (Harvard)

Readings:

Papers / Chapters / Reports

Rockoff, J., Jacob, B., Kane, T., & Staiger, D. (2011). Can you recognize an effective teacher when you recruit one? *Education Finance and Policy*, 6(1), 43-74.

Strunk, K. O., & Grissom, J. A. (2010). Do strong unions shape district policies?: Collective bargaining, teacher contract restrictiveness, and the political power of teachers' unions. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 32(3), 389-406. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373710376665>

Viano, S., Pham, L. D., Henry, G. T., Kho, A., & Zimmer, R. (2021). What teachers want: School factors predicting teachers' decisions to work in low-performing schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, 58(1), 201–233. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831220930199>

Short articles / Audio

- Chetty, R., Friedman, J., & Rockoff, J. (2012). Great teaching: Measuring its effects on students' future earnings. *Education Next*, 12(3), 59-64. <https://www.educationnext.org/great-teaching/#:~:text=Teachers%20in%20all%20grades%20from,28%20by%20about%201%20percent>
- Carver-Thomas, D. (2018, April). Diversifying the teaching profession: How to recruit and retain teachers of color. *Learning Policy Institute*. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/diversifying-teaching-profession-report>
- Goldberg, E. (2021, April). As pandemic upends teaching, fewer students want to pursue it. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/27/us/covid-school-teaching.html?searchResultPosition=18>
- Doan, S. (2019). *Beyond achievement: how teachers affect outcomes other than test scores*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR4312z6.html.
- Barnum, M. (2017, April). 5 things we now know about teacher diversity: What researcher Constance Lindsay has found about race in school. *The 74 Million*. <https://www.the74million.org/article/5-things-we-now-know-about-teacher-diversity-what-researcher-constance-lindsay-has-found-about-race-in-school/>

WEEK 7 (5/14)—Social Policy (Beyond Schools)

No guest speakers. Please be prepared to check in briefly about any idea(s) you might have for your final proposal.

Readings:*Papers / Chapters / Reports*

- Bower, C. B. (2013). Social policy and the achievement gap: What do we know? Where should we head?. *Education and Urban Society*, 45(1), 3-36.
- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2019). *A roadmap to reducing child poverty*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/25246>
[Read "Summary," pages 1-18.]
- Cohodes, S. R., Grossman, D. S., Kleiner, S. A., & Lovenheim, M. F. (2016). The effect of child health insurance access on schooling: Evidence from public insurance expansions. *Journal of Human Resources*, 51(3), 727-759.
[Okay to skim.]

Short articles / Audio

- Pulliam, C., & Reeves, R. V. (2021, March 11). *New child tax credit could slash poverty now and boost social mobility later*. Brookings Up Front blog.

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2021/03/11/new-child-tax-credit-could-slash-poverty-now-and-boost-social-mobility-later/>

Dee, T. S., & Murphy, M. (2018). How strict immigration enforcement harms schoolchildren. Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research (SIEPR) Policy Brief.

<https://siepr.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/PolicyBrief-Oct2018.pdf>

[Alternatively, see Dee & Murphy's [paper](#) in *AERJ*.]

Desmond Ang on *Probable Causation* podcast, discussing effects of police killings on student outcomes.

<https://www.probablecausation.com/podcasts/episode-50-desmond-ang>

[Alternatively, see Ang's [paper](#) in the *QJE* or [summary](#) in *EdNext*.]

Bowden, A. B., & Wasser Gish, J. (2021, April 26). *Small investments for big gains: Transforming wraparound services into an engine of opportunity*. Brookings Brown Center Chalkboard blog.

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2021/04/26/small-investments-for-big-gains-transforming-wraparound-services-into-an-engine-of-opportunity/>

J-PAL North America. *Evaluating the impact of Moving to Opportunity in the United States*. Policy brief.

<https://www.povertyactionlab.org/evaluation/evaluating-impact-moving-opportunity-united-states>

[Alternatively, see 2019 [NPR segment](#) on Moving to Opportunity.]

WEEK 8 (5/21)—Early Childhood Education

Guest speakers: Daphna Bassok (University of Virginia) & Erica Greenberg (Urban Institute)

Readings:

Papers / Chapters / Reports

Pre-Kindergarten Task Force. (2017). *The current state of scientific knowledge on pre-kindergarten effects*. Brookings Institution & Duke University Center for Child and Family Policy.

https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/duke_prekstudy_final_4-4-17_hires.pdf

Bassok, D., Fitzpatrick, M., Greenberg, E., & Loeb, S. (2016). Within-and between-sector quality differences in early childhood education and care. *Child Development*, 87(5), 1627-1645.

Short articles / Audio

Weiland, C., Unterman, R., Shapiro, A., & Yoshikawa, H. (2019, November 1). *What happens after preschool matters for sustaining the preschool boost*. Brookings Brown Center Chalkboard blog.

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2019/11/01/what-happens-after-preschool-matters-for-sustaining-the-preschool-boost/>

The White House. (2021, April 28). *Fact Sheet: The American Families Plan*. (Biden administration proposal.)

Gray-Lobe, G., Pathak, P., & Walters, C. (2021). *The long-term effects of universal preschool in Boston*.

<https://seii.mit.edu/research/study/the-long-term-effects-of-universal-preschool-in-boston/>

[Read policy brief and/or [NYT summary](#). If interested, see full paper.]

WEEK 9 (5/28)—Higher Education

Guest speakers: Dominique Baker (Southern Methodist) & Brent Evans (Vanderbilt University)

Readings:

Papers / Chapters / Reports

Baum, S., Kurose, C., & McPherson, M. (2013). An overview of American higher education. *The Future of Children*, 23(1), 17-39. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1015198.pdf>

American Association of State Colleges and Universities. (2021, April). Top 10: Higher education state policy issues for 2021. https://www.aascu.org/uploadedFiles/AASCU/Content/Root/PolicyAndAdvocacy/PolicyPublications/Policy_Matters/policymatters-2021.pdf

Dynarski, S., Libassi, C. J., Michelmore, K., & Owen, S. (2018). Closing the gap: The effect of a targeted, tuition-free promise on college choices of high-achieving, low-income students. NBER Working Paper 25349. <https://www.nber.org/papers/w25349>

Short articles / Audio

Saul, S., & Goldstein, D. (2021, May 2). Biden directs education funding to community colleges, a key lifeline. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/28/us/politics/biden-education-community-college.html>

Looney, A., Wessel, D., & Yilla, K. (2020). Voter vitals: Who owes all that student debt? And who'd benefit if it were forgiven? Brookings Institution. <https://www.brookings.edu/policy2020/votervital/who-owes-all-that-student-debt-and-whod-benefit-if-it-were-forgiven/>

Anthony Jack's TED Talk (2019). On Diversity: Access Ain't Inclusion. <https://www.tedxcambridge.com/talk/on-diversity-access-aint-inclusion/>
[Alternatively, see Jack's book, *The privileged poor: How elite colleges are failing disadvantaged students.*]

Deming, D. J., & Figlio, D. (2017). Accountability in US education: Applying lessons from K-12 experience to higher education. Urban Institute. https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/93346/accountability-in-us-education_2.pdf

WEEK 10 (6/4)—Presentations & Wrap Up

(In-class presentations. No readings assigned)