$11.5 MILLION
ED Research Funding at Vanderbilt in FY 2020

Institute of Education Sciences
National Research Centers at Peabody

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES), part of the Department of Education (ED), provides rigorous and relevant evidence on which to ground education practice and policy, and shares this information broadly. Researchers from Vanderbilt University Peabody College of education and human development often depend on funds from IES to conduct breakthrough research on critical local, state, and federal education policies. Peabody College is a leading recipient of ED research funding and IES funding in particular. IES supports national R&D centers that are intended to contribute significantly to solving education problems in the U.S. by engaging in research, development, evaluations, and national leadership activities to improve the education system and, ultimately, student achievement. Each center conducts supplemental research and provides national leadership in advancing evidence-based practice and policy within its respective topic area.

Peabody College currently is home to one such IES center, highlighted below. Prior National Research Centers located at Peabody included the National Center on Scaling Up Effective Schools, which was awarded a seven-year, $13.6 million grant in 2010; the National Center on Performance Incentives, which was awarded a five-year, $10.8 million grant in 2006; and the National Center on School Choice, which was awarded a five-year, $9.9 million grant in 2004.

Accelerated Academic Achievement (A3) Research Initiative

The National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER) (part of IES) awarded a team of Peabody researchers $10 million in 2013 to develop and test the efficacy of intervention programs to improve the academic achievement of children with serious and persistent learning disabilities in grades three, four, and five. The IES grant that established the Initiative on Accelerating the Academic Achievement of Students with Learning Disabilities has been extended through 2021. This initiative enables Peabody researchers to develop and rigorously evaluate intensive reading and mathematics intervention programs. These programs aim to improve reading comprehension skills in social studies and science and address fractions, decimals, and algebra. The research will provide teachers with validated platforms to use in schools to ensure the academic success of students with serious learning problems.

$5M research network focuses on career and technical education

Vanderbilt education researchers are leading the Career and Technical Education Research Network, a $5 million, IES-funded research project designed to increase the evidence base on career and technical education. The researchers assist leaders and practitioners in their efforts to strengthen career and technical education policies and programs and to improve student outcomes. The researchers are evaluating career and technical education programs or models to identify those that are most ready for rigorous evaluation. They are conducting training for the next generation of researchers, as well as training state and district policymakers and practitioners to use data and research to inform decisions, including the development of online modules.
National Center for Special Education Research

Vanderbilt is a top recipient of funding from NCSER, which supports a comprehensive program of education research designed to expand knowledge and understanding of infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities and those at risk for disabilities including:

• A $1.22 million grant to test the efficacy of the Promoting Adolescents’ Comprehension of Text intervention on reading comprehension for middle-school learners with disabilities.

• A $748,000 grant to determine the sustainability of strong positive effects of a prior intensive math intervention for students with math disabilities.

• A five-year, $3.5 million grant to test an intervention for teaching fractions to students with or at risk for mathematics learning disabilities.

• A four-year, $3.06 million grant to conduct a randomized trial of a technology-based intervention to assist middle school students with or at risk for reading disabilities in making the inferences necessary to understand written material.

• A four-year, $1.5 million grant will enable an evaluation of the promise of blending two successful interventions to improve language development and social and academic outcomes. The Pyramid Model of positive behavior supports has been shown to improve behavior, while Enhanced Milieu Teaching can improve language development in toddlers at risk for persistent language disorders.

ED Office of Special Education Programs Training Grants

The Peabody College Department of Special Education has received six grants totaling nearly $12 million in funding from ED’s Office of Special Education Programs in 2019, including:

• A $6.43 million grant for the Vanderbilt-led National Center for Leadership in Intensive Intervention to train 28 doctoral students with expertise in intensive interventions for students with complex learning and behavior disabilities.

• A $1.25 million grant to fund 20 master’s students as part of Project i3, which trains certified behavior analysts to provide intensive interdisciplinary intervention for school-age children with disabilities and high-intensity needs.

• A $1.25 million grant to train 15 master’s students in early childhood special education and child studies.

• A $1.25 million grant to train 24 master’s students through Project BASE, which supports children with high-intensity behavioral, academic, social, and emotional needs.

• A $1.24 million grant to train five doctoral students to be certified behavior analysts and leaders in special education.

• A four-year, $1.25 million grant will address dire shortages of school personnel by preparing future special education teachers and related service providers to use augmentative and alternative communication practices to support and enhance the outcomes of students with limited or no functional speech.

Vanderbilt, State of Tenn. partner to improve K-12 education

In 2016, Vanderbilt University and the Tennessee Department of Education formed a research-practice partnership that produces a series of interconnected, rigorous research studies in order to inform the state’s school improvement efforts. housed at Peabody College, the Tennessee Education Research Alliance (TERA) carries out and directs research with clear, practical implications for the state’s key education strategies and, in doing so, contributes to the national conversation on education policy and practice.

A portion of TERA’s annual Tennessee Educator Survey was dedicated to issues dealing with COVID-19. More than three-quarters of teachers surveyed indicated that the most helpful supports needed to promote educational access during COVID-19 school closures are technological supports for remote learning. Educators across Tennessee consistently reported on technological barriers preventing remote learning, their concern for student access to crucial services, and their need for additional guidance and resources. These needs were even more pronounced in rural communities lacking internet infrastructure and schools serving more low-income families. Other key findings of the 2020 survey showed that nine out of 10 teachers agree that their school is a learning community that encourages ideas and suggestions. One out of five teachers report spending more than 10 hours per week creating or sourcing their instructional materials. School-based mental health professionals signaled a need to improve referral processes with only half agreeing the process gets students the help they need quickly.

For more information, please contact Vanderbilt’s Office of Federal Relations: Christina West (202) 216-4370 · Heather Bloemhard (202) 216-4368 federalrelations@vanderbilt.edu FY 2020