

**Investigating, Impacting, and  
Improving (I3) Education and  
Schools: The Center for Education  
Innovation (2008-2017)**

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**Investigating, Impacting, and Improving (I<sup>3</sup>) Education and Schools:  
The Center for Education Innovation (2008-2017)**

On July 1, 2008, the Mississippi Center for Education Innovation, a nonprofit corporation funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, began as a comprehensive effort to transform education in the poorest state in the nation. The vision for transformative education in Mississippi emerged post-Hurricane Katrina and the glaring disparities and subsequent implications of social, educational, political, and economical conditions therein. While some of these disparate conditions might have been made evident by the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2008, the re-emergence of the disparate conditions served as a vehemently public or openly transparent reminder of sorely forgotten or poorly fulfilled policies and practices *in education* and *by schools* in Mississippi. The timely and purposeful establishment of the Mississippi Center for Education Innovation, as began in 2008, now referred to as The Center for Education Innovation since 2010, is an organizational confluence of policy, practice, and programs for transforming education and schools inside out.

Simply put, context matters in all things public--*social, educational, economical, and political*. The initially purported big picture view of The Center for Education Innovation could not be rightfully assumed without the immediate and obvious influence of context. Following below are highlighted contextual factors and demographical data of The Center for Education Innovation in Table 1 as identified by Kid’s Count (2008) and the *Management Progress Report of the Mississippi Center for Education Innovation* (2008):

Table 1: Mississippi Demographics 2008

<b>Contextual Factors</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>National</b>
<b>Education</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> grade students who scored at or above proficient reading level: 2007	19%	32%
	4 <sup>th</sup> grade students who scored at or above proficient math level: 2007	21%	39%
<b>Economic</b>	Median income of families with children	\$36,500	\$54,500
	Children in extreme poverty (income below 50% of poverty level): 2006	14%	8%
<b>Social</b>	Teen birth rate ( <i>births per 100 females ages 15-19</i> )		48 <sup>th</sup>
	Infant mortality rates ( <i>deaths per 1,000 live births</i> )		50 <sup>th</sup>

Table 1 indicates how Mississippi ranked in the lower tiers of economical, social, and educational contexts in 2008. What cannot be negated in the quest for establishing The Center for Education Innovation is the executive standing of former [but then newly appointed] State Superintendent of Education Hank Bounds. According to the *Management Progress Report of the Mississippi Center for Education Innovation* (2008), Hank Bounds asserted “whatever the question is, the answer is education” (p. 1) which provided the “impetus for the public-private partnership that could conceivably change education in Mississippi” (p. 1). As Chief State School Officer in Mississippi, the political nature of the executive position offered critical

leverage and social capital to generate the appropriate buy-in and funding from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. As a bi-product of quality education, The Center for Education Innovation would have the capacity in some ways, to either redefine current economical and social conditions or how students and stakeholders alike experience them.

Thus, for nearly ten years, The Center for Education Innovation has been engaging in important work to transform education in Mississippi. To understand in a more synthesized manner how this work has been purposefully aligned to accomplish the end goal of transformation, the following questions are explored in this white paper:

- **INVESTIGATING**: How have contextual factors and capacity-building efforts shaped the work of The Center of Education Innovation?
- **IMPACTING**: What role has strategic partnerships and outreach initiatives assumed for education systems and policy as defined by The Center of Education Innovation?
- **IMPROVING**: What 4best practices and individual and institutionalized-focused outcomes have emerged through evidence-based efforts?

Common themes are identified based upon the synthesized view of external and internal evaluation reports from 2008-2017 as well as the highlighted perspectives from selected evaluation reports. Such critical insights gained through this exploration provide succinct perspectives about how The Center of Education Innovation pursues transformational change in education and for schools.

***INVESTIGATING EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS:***  
**How have contextual factors and capacity-building efforts shaped the work of The Center of Education Innovation?**

The process of investigating the contextual factors and capacity-building efforts involving The Center for Education Innovation requires consideration of the underlying *Theory of Change* for which frames the work. *Theory of Change* is “a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context” (Theory of Change, 2017). Hence, The Center for Education Innovation has identified the central problem as an *opportunity gap from early childhood through secondary education*. Best practices, policy changes, stakeholder engagement, and related areas are strategically identified as mechanisms to generate transformative educational outcomes. Figure 1, the Social Impact Model, is as follows:

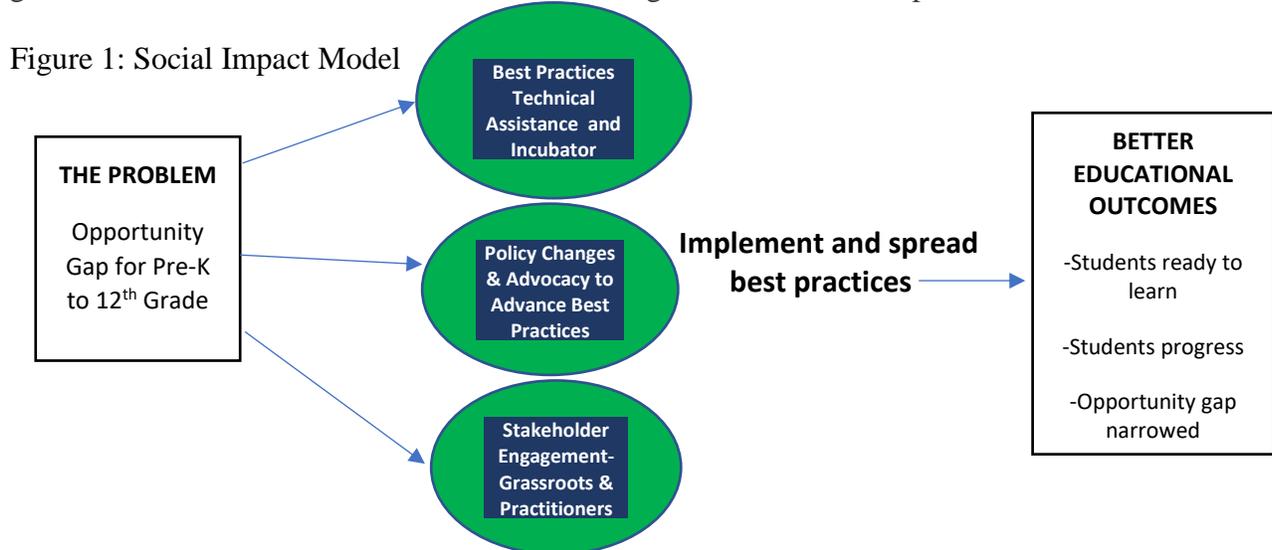


Figure 1 shows how best practices assume a universal connotation suggesting that evidence-based, proven strategies related to each of the identified mechanisms (i.e. technical assistance and incubator, policy changes and advocacy, stakeholder engagement, grassroots and practitioners) would be used to change outcomes in Mississippi education and schools (i.e. students ready to learn, students' progress, opportunity gap narrowed). Such long-term sustained approach to transformative change involves both formative and summative measure for which The Center for Education Innovation uniquely employs to address the *opportunity gap problem*.

## **Early Childhood Education and Educational Pathways**

The Center for Education Innovation suggests time (*early*) and quality (*rigor and relevance*) influences educational outcomes given emerging or accessible opportunities within educational pathways. The more students are provided with quality opportunities and access early-on the more likely students are to have similar experiences as they matriculate through school (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.). The Management Progress Report of The Center for Education Innovation (2008) particularly cites how the Mississippi Department of Education conducted a study of Reading First sites and found “that many students enter the classroom with the vocabulary of a one-year old. By the time they reach kindergarten, students from an affluent family have heard 30 million more words than a child from a poor family” (p. 3). This critical study in Mississippi along with other national studies (i.e. Economic Policy Institute, 2007; National Institute for Early Education Research, 2006) reaffirms the importance of early childhood education as a catalyst for generating improved student achievement and increased graduation rates as well as lowered student retention and special education referrals.

National and state research studies reaffirmed the need for viable measures to ensure seamless and symmetrical processes were occurring in both school and community arenas. Thus, from connecting and supporting families to connecting schools and communities to appropriate resources, The Center for Education Innovation has engaged in formative efforts to enhance schools and the delivery of education. The Evaluation Report for The Center for Education Innovation (2013) highlights technical assistance as classroom management, business operations, nutrition advising, and parental engagement while procedural assistance is provided in food program enrollment, QRIS preparation, parenting skills development and policy changes. The Kellogg Program Narrative Report (2017) documents how these formative approaches of technical assistance have generated summative outcomes. The report asserts the following: “Technical assistance support from CEI to our partnering organizations and schools has yielded notable results in teacher training and certification through Allies for Quality Care Program, the creation and continuation of low-cost online services through the MS Alliance for Early Learning Resources, development of P-16 Councils and education scorecards, increased community education opportunities and establishment of a model STEM program” (p. 6). Such outcomes have particularly become most noticeable through the childcare centers, Allies for Quality Care, located in Copiah, Hinds, Rankin, Simpson, Warren, and Yazoo Counties. In a survey completed in 2013, nearly 90% of the participants indicated the Allies' staff was extremely or very helpful in providing technical assistance (The Evaluation Report for The Center for Education Innovation, 2013). School-community endeavors are critical toward delivering quality early childhood education and fostering viable educational pathways for students.

## **Differentiated Professional Development**

Differentiated professional development is used to build organizational and individual capacities. For enhanced organizational capacity, The Center for Education Innovation has engaged the expertise of leaders in the field to guide professional development toward enhanced organizational capacity. For example, The Evaluation Report for The Center for Education Innovation (2013) reports that Root Cause, a nonprofit management-consulting firm, developed a Performance Measurement System, as inclusive of both formative and summative measures, as a means to “build its capacity to measure, deepen, and sustain its impact” (p. 1). As a targeted, yet interactive, form of professional development, the deliverables included the following: (1) Social Impact Model and outline of social problem, interventions, outputs, outcomes, and intended impact; (2) Data Collection Practices and review of organizational documents and interviews with evaluation staff; (3) Performance Measurement System and the inclusion of performance indicators, process and outcome’ tests as well as a resource and implementation plan; and (4) Prospectus used to communicate work to external audiences including donors, partners, and other stakeholders. The governing practices shape the processes for the administrative context and operational aspects of The Center for Education Innovation. Although a consulting entity is providing the professional development, the interactive nature of the engagement allows for buy-in and ownership to occur.

For enhanced individual capacity, The Center for Education Innovation has supported participation in various conferences and other professional development activities (i.e. One Voice Conference, Black Summit, NAACP Conference, Learning Lab Meetings). Leadership and staff members attend professional development unique to their respective positions within The Center for Education Innovation (The Kellogg Program Narrative Report, 2017). ‘Train the trainer’ model is employed by The Center for Education Innovation given that what is learned individually gets shared collectively to the staff and to those who receive training as technical assistance. Not only does this approach serve to enhance individual capacity, but it also serves to enhance organizational capacity. The transferability of the currency for which the knowledge of best practices provides for administrators and staff only reinforces alignment with the work of The Center for Education Innovation and the stakeholders served.

***IMPACTING EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS:***  
**What role has strategic partnership and outreach initiatives assumed  
for education systems and policy as defined by The  
Center for Education Innovation?**

Strategic partnerships and outreach initiatives serve as important conduits for The Center for Education Innovation toward developing and delivering effective programming necessary to address education systems and policy. The types of partnerships and initiatives often influence the extent to which engagement occurs for the stakeholders served.

### **Diverse Partnerships**

Strategic partnerships are diverse and have been cultivated with public, public-private, and private sectors given wide-spread impact and capacity of The Center for Education Innovation.

For nearly ten years, The Center for Education Innovation has partnered with 40 different state entities and nearly 40 local and national organizations (Cascade Educational Consultants and Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, 2012). Particularly within 2011, many of these partnerships resulted in intentionally-focused programming efforts: (1) community, family, and school engagement; (2) teacher quality and student achievement; (3) leadership and school improvement; and (4) child development and early learning. Funds were invested by the Kellogg Foundation to situate the Center to engage in shared and meaningful collaborative efforts with other Mississippi agencies. Leverage funding in these programmatic efforts ranged from 60% to 95% which reaffirms the depth and breadth of relationships within the strategic partnerships existing between The Center for Education Innovation and external stakeholders. Varied forms of participation of The Center for Education Innovation (i.e. providing direct input, writing, planned meetings) served as a leveraging mechanism to ensure the views of the Center were reflected in policy discussion, grant procurements, and related programs, and related educational endeavors (Cascade Educational Consultants and Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, 2012).

Critical analyses of the totality of the diverse partnerships suggest shared commonalities of success according to The Center for Education Innovation: Collaborating for Success in Changing Education-An evaluation of MSCEI's Kellogg Foundation Grant (2017): 1) Skin in the Game and being able to sustain or transform the relationship beyond the initial partnership; 2) Content Expertise and bringing in partners who have a deeper knowledge about how to operationalize policies, leadership, programs, and partnerships; 3) Informal and Formal Sharing/Open Communication and working to build collegiality through informal and formal gatherings; 4) Socio-Emotional Supports and Well-Being and to create a deeper solidarity and willingness to engage the human side of change; 5) Focused Agreements, Goals, and Accountability and the use of mutually articulated agreements and contracts, Memoranda of Understanding, and work and strategic plans; 6) Data Sharing/Data Looping and using informal and formal qualitative and quantitative methods to inform programs and to define direction; 7) Carrying the Ball Down the Field and how partners understand parameters and limitations in which they and others have to operate; and 8) Local/National Relationships and the introduction of national partners and thought leaders. Each of these commonalities show how long-term investments within partnerships provide the basis for establishing meaningful, well-connected relationships. Notwithstanding many of the partnerships are considered to be politically driven as based upon the type of program being implemented. The Center for Education Innovation: Collaborating for Success in Changing Education-An evaluation of MSCEI's Kellogg Foundation Grant (2017) finds that participation within the Allies program had been stifled given the perception participants would have to be a part of the Mississippi Quality Stars program. The Center for Education Innovation has been able to navigate the political nuances given influential relationships and resourcefulness.

### **Policy, Practice, and Program Intersection**

Throughout the nearly ten years, work around policy, practice, and programs for The Center for Education Innovation have intersections for which are critically important. The Kellogg Program Narrative Report (2017), The Center for Education Innovation: Collaborating for Success in Changing Education-An evaluation of MSCEI's Kellogg Foundation Grant (2017),

and CEI Performance Measure Tool (2017) identify various policy/\*practice or policy/program entities for which The Center has engaged. Consequently, the following emerges:

- Analyses of the policy/practice combination is more directly assumed as part of the ongoing work of the Center. The impactfulness of policy/practice has been “spread to 27 school districts and over 300 parents and educators, incubated innovated community led initiatives in 20 school districts; improved business practices, environmental and academic quality and nutrition with 34 early childhood centers across the stated generated” (The Center for Education Innovation, 2017).
- Analyses of the program/policy entities appears to be in partnership with other similarly-situated organizations. The Kellogg Program Narrative Report (2017) asserts “one of the Center’s important tenets of community and stakeholder engagement are its focus on policy. Recognizing that the key to long-term change in education rests in being able to effectively influence policies that define the parameters that guide the process and ultimately impact the success or failure of the system, CEI engaged in working to positively affect education policy” (p. 12). The impactfulness of program/policy resonates within the collective, cohesive, and shared interests with like groups.

Table 2, Intersection of Policy, Programs, and Practice highlights the following entities:

Table 2  
Intersections of Policy, Programs and Practice

<b>*Practice</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Program</b>
<b>Policy</b>				<b>Policy</b>
Learning Can't Wait	Elected officials displaying greater focus on early childhood development and learning	Elected officials are measurably more engaged in early childhood development and learning.	Technology, Entertainment, Healthcare and Construction Summit and Hackathon (TECHJXN)	Coordination, convening of major partners, national speakers and youth, 2015, 2016
Education Scorecard	School districts' adoption of Education Scorecard practices and metrics; Communities start focusing on Scorecard Metrics	School districts' practices, metrics, (and policies) have been modified based on Scorecards (can we also measure mentions of ACT or other key metrics in newspapers, etc.?)	Mississippi Department of Education, Dropout Prevention (MDE)	Technical amendment adopted by MDE for all schools to track retention and prevention
MERC II (MS Education Reform Coalition)	Number of communication pieces/opeds; number of individuals visiting website/accessing reports or white papers, etc.	Quarterly white papers on educational issues, press releases/ events, opeds, etc.	United Way of the Capital Area	Stimulated new focus on STEM, creativity, and innovation for regional work, including the emerging Capital Area Innovation Fund

Influencing/ Standard Setting (Partnership)	# of CEI-endorsed best practice standards established as and/or under consideration for state-wide policy	Best practice standards established by coalitions are either (a) established as state-wide policy or (b) are under consideration for such, by the legislative & executive branches.		Alignment Jackson	Assisted in initial financing of team visits to learn about organizations; ongoing participation on boards and AJ internal restructuring and vision
MS Learning Lab (MSLL)	--% of returning participants, twelve months out and greater  --Signed on partners for specific public and private grant competitions	--Maintaining and growing membership participation  --Assembly of coalitions in response to federal and private funding opportunities for education innovation.		United Children's Collaborative/Mississippi Alliance of Black School Educators	Assisted in defining organizational goals and objectives for Sunflower County coalition, which is now focused on school to prison pipeline reform
Communications (Press Releases, Op Eds, Blog, Social Media, etc.)	Number of communication pieces/opeds; number of individuals visiting website/accessing reports or white papers, etc.	Quarterly white papers on educational issues, press releases/events, opeds, etc.		Brown Elementary School (Jackson Public Schools)	Secured funding and technical support for the Toyota STEM program to integrate engineering into the curriculum and innovation in informal settings
				Midtown Charter School	Assisted in initial organizing of the community residents
				Allies Partnership	Coordinating entity to provide business and technical support to early childhood providers, including assisting some to reach profitability
*The term practice is being used instead of advocacy as indicated in the original chart (Kellogg Program Narrative Report, 2017). While both of these terms could be used in an interchangeable manner, practice is more reflective of activity engagement as opposed to purporting or touting a view.				Prosperity Center/Midtown Partners, Inc.	Prosperity Center redesign informed by learning lab on Executive Functioning; Prosperity Center now seen as potential statewide model by the Department of Human Services and other funders; informed Prosperity Center's participation in national learning circle

Table 2 suggests that policy-focused areas align with the current educational policy pursued by Mississippi Department of Education (i.e. scorecard, school to prison pipeline, academic rigor and standards, retention and dropout). Table 2 also suggests programs are consistent with best

practices within the field (i.e. STEM, community engagement, technical support) while practices are focused and measurable (i.e. engaging elected officials, communication, learning lab). Thus, intersections of policy, practice, and programs are a matter of relevance to political, social, economic and educational trends affecting The Center for Education Innovation.

***IMPROVING EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS:***  
**What best practices and individual and institutionalized-focused outcomes have emerged through evidence-based efforts?**

Best practices have been identified at both the individualized (micro) and institutionalized (macro) levels toward improving educational and school outcomes for The Center for Education Innovation. What remains interesting nonetheless is how the micro and macro levels are uniquely interconnected in their capacity to simultaneously effectively and efficiently address the opportunity gap for Pre-K to 12<sup>th</sup> grade as the problem defined by the Center. The level at which both top-down and bottom-up approaches work becomes the level to which improvement and ultimately transformation is made.

### **Comprehensive Efforts for Institutionalized Outcomes**

Comprehensive efforts are necessary for improving institutional outcomes and require measured venues through which to do so. As one comprehensive measure, The Center for Education Innovation has successfully developed and instituted the Education Scorecard as an accountability tool. The Education Scorecard, as a summative measure, stemmed from the lack of a centralized location to view pertinent school and student data and the initial efforts for the Center to create a toolkit for P-16 efforts required by the Mississippi Department of Education (The Kellogg Program Narrative, 2017).

- The Education Scorecard provides “a grade to school districts based on a variety of factors to include number of students, licensed teachers, National Board Certified teaches, expenditures per student, etc. The scorecard has been designed and developed in order to provide a quick reference guide that includes a variety of critical school district data points and related information” (The Kellogg Program Narrative, 2017, p. 7). Emanating successes from the Education Scorecard include “within the Jackson Public School District, the Northwest Middle School saw a tremendous uptick in its grade moving from ‘D’ in school years 2010 through 2012 to ‘A’ from school years 2012 through 2014 while Peebles Middle school experienced a downtick from ‘D’ to F’ within the same school year period” (p. 7).

The Education Scorecard as an accountability measure offers a unique opportunity to be scaled up and thereby broaden the use of accountability data in a more systemic manner.

Another comprehensive effort includes the DASH Network as a community engagement measure. Originating in 2009, DASH convenes community stakeholders from the towns of Duncan, Alligator, and Shelby and consist of a diverse cross-section of members within these communities.

- As a flagship effort, the goals of the coalition were identified as follows: “(1) Bring community members and leaders together around common goals; (2) Engage parents in schools; and (3) Help children prepare for standardized testing” (The Kellogg Program Narrative, 2017, p. 10). DASH is self-sustaining and is inclusive of a diverse group of community leaders. CEI continued to widen the umbrella of cooperation in the DASH communities by building integral partnerships with local churches and faith-based leaders” (p. 10).

The DASH initiative, as a comprehensive measure of institutionalized outcomes, can be replicated in other communities to enhance the level of community and stakeholder engagement around selected topics.

The Center for Education Innovation: Collaborating for Success in Changing Education-An evaluation of CEI’s Kellogg Foundation Grant (2017) identify three comprehensive efforts to achieve a scaled-up, more strategic approach for generating institutionalized outcomes. Those include the following: (1) Articulate a continuous learning and performance model; (2) Engage new local, state, and global organizations and funders; and (3) Attract and build persons with 21<sup>st</sup> century innovation competencies.

- With performance-based learning for students and teachers, strategies have to be selected for the acquisition and application of knowledge, skills, and work habits through the performance of tasks that are meaningful and engaging (ACSD, 2017). The integration of the logic model with the performance-based model allows for short and long-term goals and outcomes, inputs (resources), outputs (activities), and broader impact for stakeholders. The scaled-up approach is poised to produce data for The Center for Education Innovation necessary to make predictions and decisions for allocating financial, material, and human resources more effectively and efficiently.
- Expanding the reach of the organization remains imperative because of decreasing budgets and increased demands for need-based funding. The scaled-up approach demonstrates to potential funders the organizational capacity to conduct and host more rigorous, wide-spread, and costly initiatives.
- The ability to attract and hire appropriate personnel with 21<sup>st</sup> century competencies is critical given the requisite knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for promoting and being able to fulfill a competitive agenda. Strategic decisions must be made about the ‘whos’, ‘whats’, and ‘whys’ of personnel due to the formidable needs of human capital associated with executing the vision of The Center for Education Innovation.

The current comprehensive efforts involving the Education Scorecard and the DASH Network as juxtaposed with the recommended comprehensive efforts by The Center for Education Innovation: Collaborating for Success in Changing Education-An evaluation of CEI’s Kellogg Foundation Grant (2017) uniquely align. The Education Scorecard is poised to be connected with the performance-based learning model and the logic model could be developed with the indicators of the Education Scorecard and the DASH Network. A comprehensive effort of this

sort serves to centralize all data collection and analyses unique to The Center for Education Innovation which allows for a more robust operational and administrative productivity.

### Targeted Initiatives for Individualized Outcomes

The Center for Education Innovation has engaged in different targeted initiatives for producing individualized outcomes. One curriculum-focused initiative involved the Mississippians Integrating Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (MI-STEM). The initiative targeted nearly 230 Pre-K-5<sup>th</sup> grade students at Brown Elementary School. Table 3 provides the STEM goals and accomplishments:

Table 3  
STEM Goals and Accomplishments

STEM Goals	STEM Accomplishments
To increase STEM knowledge among Brown Elementary School (BES) PK-5th grade students;	The academic rating of Brown Elementary School increased from ‘F’ school to a ‘B’ school since the implementation of MI-STEM.
To increase positive attitudes toward STEM fields of study and careers among PK-5th BES students	Increase in positive attitudes based upon oral pre- and post-assessments
To increase STEM knowledge & skills among BES PK-5th grade teachers.	Satisfaction reviews of trainee knowledge and skill transfer upon completion of trainings

Table 3 shows the improvements for which are linked to the STEM initiative. Individualized outcomes are experienced by the students and the school as attitudes and ratings are improved alike. Table 3 also shows the need for curriculum-focused initiatives as means to increase academic outcomes. Such best practice, as a targeted initiative, provides a focused way to improve particular outcomes in a holistic manner using both academic and social measures.

Another targeted initiative for The Center for Education Innovation involves a community-focused effort is the P-16 Community Engagement Council Network. The P-16 Community Engagement Council Network is a “collaboration between The Center for Education Innovation, the Mississippi Department of Education, and P-16 Councils across Mississippi and serves as a community support ecosystem for underperforming schools...nurture the development, success, and sustainability of local P-16 Community Engagement Council so that they can support the improved academic achievement and life success of children... (The Kellogg Program Narrative Report, 2017, p. 8). Table 4 shows the following:

Table 4  
P-16 Community Engagement Goals and Accomplishments

P-16 Community Engagement Council Goals	P-16 Community Engagement Council Accomplishments
Establish a statewide P-16 Council network	Developed structures and mechanisms for the statewide Mississippi P-16 Council Network
Conduct a statewide P-16 PD trainings and updates	Training workshops, policy-development session by-laws creation Technical Assistance (TA) and policy/practice updates to P-16 Councils

Create an environment where the push for policy change is driven from a grassroots level	Ongoing site support for targeted district P-16 Councils (i.e. North Bolivar)
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Table 4 shows the improvements for which are linked to the P-16 Community Engagement initiative. Individualized outcomes are experienced by the community through focused efforts with the Council. Table 4 also shows the need for community-focused initiatives as means to increase community engagement. Such best practice, as a targeted initiative, provides a focused way to improve particular outcomes through community engagement.

## Concluding Statements

The white paper, *Investigating, Impacting, and Improving (I<sup>3</sup>) Education and Schools: The Center for Education Innovation (2008-2017)*, offers insights into the organizational confluence of policy, programs, and programs to address the opportunity gap in PreK-12<sup>th</sup> grade. What becomes evident is the interplay of various dynamics necessary for enhanced educational outcomes and the appropriate measures for which are critical toward transforming Mississippi education and schools.

Investigating education and schools requires consideration of the early childhood education as pre-cursor to successful matriculation to secondary schools. Having appropriate professional development both internally and externally is critical toward achieving the desired outcome. Impacting education and schools entails the development and maintenance of diverse partnerships to ensure the coalescing of resources, relevancy, and relationships. Such processes for impact are also critical toward bridging any gap within the intersections of policy, practice, and programs to ensure continuity in the delivery of administrative and operational endeavors. Improving education and schools require comprehensive efforts for institutionalized outcomes given the need to address the systemic nature of what change demands. Targeted initiatives using community and curriculum-focused efforts offer more individualized approaches to generating important outcomes.

A recent survey asked the board members of The Center for Education Innovation about their ability to describe the impact of the work. Only half (50%) of the board indicated their ability to do so while 25% indicated they could a little and the other 25% indicated they could (The Center for Education Innovation: Collaborating for Success in Changing Education-An evaluation of CEI's Kellogg Foundation Grant, 2017). The inability for the other 50% to not be able to describe the impact of the Center is not the indicative of the impact of the Center. The inability is more so linked to marketing strategies to promote clear and consistent messaging about what the Center is/does and what the Center is not/does not. Thus, it is important to engage in appropriate communication to ensure the good work is not lost in the message or the absence or lack thereof. Consequently, corrective actions for marketing within this organization have been pursued and have generated the following approach as based upon The Marketing Plan (2017): (1) Begin with a thorough examination of (MS)CEI's Mission, Vision and End Statement; (2) Review the tools outlined in this report and determine the best strategies for your Agency; (3) Consider your budget, resources and staff capacity; and (4) Tailor your message to your stakeholders and the constituents you serve, as well as the media. Integrating these components as part of the administrative and operational components of The Center for Education will be critically necessary to continue the quality of engagement needed.

Additionally, decision-making processes involved with understanding and demonstrating to the public the meaning of The Center for Education Innovation as an organizational confluence of policy, practice, and programs cannot be underestimated. The Center for Education Innovation: Collaborating for Success in Changing Education-An evaluation of CEI's Kellogg Foundation Grant (2017) indicated that advocates of The Center for Education Innovation are challenged to "balance the process versus project driven organization" (p. 24). Thus, deliberate decisions and intentional positions have to be assumed regarding initiatives to be pursued and those to not.

The Center for Education Innovation recognizes transformational change in education and schools is inclusive and does not negate the importance of economical, political, social, and educational contexts. Today, The Center for Education Innovation is an organizational confluence of policy, practice, and programs as it has evolved from targeted initiatives or projects into a more complex organization. Thus, The Center for Education Innovation has the fundamental capacity to offer holistic approaches for engaging stakeholders in meaningful ways and thereby continue to contribute toward efforts to diminish the opportunity gap for PreK-12th grade students.

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- Evaluation Report for CEI (2012-2013); Cascade Educational Consultants and Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, 2012
- Fourth Year Evaluation Report: The Center for Education Innovation (2011)
- Third Year Evaluation Report: The Center for Education Innovation (2010)
- Second Year Evaluation Report: Mississippi Center for Education Innovation (2009) *(name of organization changed in 2010 to The Center for Education Innovation)*

### Evaluation Reports (Internally Produced)

- The Toyota Final Evaluation (2017)
- CEI Performance Measure Tool (2017)
- The Kellogg Program Narrative Report (May 2015-January 2017)
- Management Progress Report (Year 1: 2008)

## **ABOUT ACADEMIC PATHWAYS INCORPORATED**

Academic Pathways, Incorporated ([www.academicpathways.org](http://www.academicpathways.org)) engages in consulting endeavors with colleges and universities, K-12 schools, and related organizations and associations to enhance individual (i.e. students, parents, families) and institutional (i.e. accreditation, programmatic, culture) outcomes. Academic Pathways offers both traditional and Content App Educational Research to provide data-driven solutions and evidence-based strategies.

## **ABOUT THE PRESIDENT AND CEO OF ACADEMIC PATHWAYS INCORPORATED**

RoSusan D. Bartee, Ph.D., who is a tenured Professor and previously Program Coordinator of Educational Leadership at the University of Mississippi, recently returned from academic leave from the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities in Washington, DC. Dr. Bartee served as Interim Vice President in the Office of Access and Success where she advanced degree completion efforts, expanded internal and external collaborative partnerships, engaged university presidents and other higher educational administrators, enhanced the visibility of the 1890 Universities, and provided fiscal management. More specifically, garnering support from major higher education organizations and foundations (i.e. Lumina Foundation, USA Funds, NASA, Educational Testing Service), Dr. Bartee also procured a National Science Foundation grant where she served as Principal Investigator focusing on increasing minority engineering faculty at the rank of Professor and minority engineering students in the academic pipeline and co-author on a recently published APLU report, *Diverse Pathways to STEM Degree Completion: Connecting Minority Males to Student Success*.

A nationally recognized scholar, Dr. Bartee is the author or editor of four books, *Contemporary perspectives on capital in educational contexts* (forthcoming, 2018), *Contemporary perspectives on capital in educational contexts* (2011); *The broken cisterns of African American education: Academic performance and achievement in the post-Brown era* (2009), *School matters: Why African American students need multiple forms of capital* (2007). Dr. Bartee serves as the editor of a book series and is also the author or coauthor of numerous academic publications. Dr. Bartee has served as a program evaluator for federal, philanthropic, and related student success initiatives totaling nearly \$8 million. In July 2012, Dr. Bartee became the first African American to receive Tenure and Promotion to Full Professor in the Department of Leadership and Counselor Education at the University of Mississippi. Under Dr. Bartee's leadership as UM-EDLD Program Coordinator, the program received nationally recognitions with conditions' status with the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC). Dr. Bartee also teaches graduate-level courses in educational leadership, research methods, and cultural context of education.

A 2008 recipient of the Researcher of the Year Award at the School of Education at the University of Mississippi, Dr. Bartee's research interests are educational leadership, organizational and school culture, cultural and social capital, and educational and social attainment. Dr. Bartee contributes broadly to the public and scholarly discourse on critical issues affecting educational contexts. Prior to becoming a faculty member at the University of Mississippi, Dr. Bartee served as the Associate Director at the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in Washington, DC for the Reading First Teacher Education Network (RFTEN). RFTEN, a \$4.5 million dollar federal grant focused on restructuring teacher education programs using evidence-based research for minority serving institutions (i.e. Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institution, Tribal Colleges). Dr. Bartee provided administrative leadership, budget oversight, and served as a liaison between the RFTEN project, the respective institutions, and the U.S. Department of Education. Dr. Bartee also previously served as Interim Executive Director at the Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute of the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) in Fairfax, Virginia as well as the Project Coordinator for the Summer Research Opportunities Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Dr. Bartee is listed as one of Mississippi's Top 40 Under 40 (2013), Distinguished Alumni from the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (2013), Who's Who in Black Mississippi (2010), Who's Who of American Women (2008), Who's Who Among Executives and Professionals (2008), and Who's Who in America (2007). She is also a former Institute of Governmental Affairs Program Fellow (IGAP) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and has previously interned with the Office of Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education and the White House. Other recognitions include a Commendation from the office of the Mayor of Coldwater, MS and a Presidential Citation from Tougaloo College in Jackson, MS and member of 2014 Leadership Lafayette. Dr. Bartee further served as the Director of the National Educational Policy Forum, one of the activities adjoining the 2008 Presidential Debate at the University of Mississippi, which convened nationally-recognized educational researchers and public policy advocates from across the country.

Dr. Bartee is a member of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), charter task force member with the Boys and Girls Club of America, a Board of Examiners Member for the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE; now the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation), and former Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women at the University of Mississippi. Dr. Bartee serves as a grant reviewer for the United States Department of Education, program evaluator with national policy and advocacy organizations, institutions of higher education, and school districts, educational consultant for K-12 school contexts and leadership initiatives, and motivational speaker in various public arenas. A recipient of additional awards and honors, Dr. Bartee is a member of the Links, Incorporated, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated and serves further in 70 civic, religious, educational, and other related affairs at the local, state, national, and international levels.

Dr. Bartee received a Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Policy Studies from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, a Master of Arts in Liberal Studies from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois and a Bachelor of Arts in English (magna cum laude) from Tougaloo College in Jackson, Mississippi.