

April 3, 2013

Board of Advisors

MEMORANDUM

Robert Boruch
University of Pennsylvania

TO: Board of Advisors of the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy

Jonathan Crane
Coalition for Evidence-Based
Policy

FROM: Jon Baron

David Ellwood
Harvard University

RE: Update on our work

Judith Gueron
MDRC

We're pleased to report important new progress in our work:

Ron Haskins
Brookings Institution

- **The U.S. Department of Education has taken a major step to institutionalize evidence-based grantmaking, using an approach we have strongly encouraged in our work with federal officials: making rigorous evidence a selection factor in awarding grants.** Specifically, the Department's proposed amendments to its grantmaking regulations ([link](#)) give Department program offices two new standard provisions they can use as selection criteria: one provision incentivizing grant applicants to include an evaluation that meets rigorous What Works Clearinghouse standards (which prioritize well-conducted randomized controlled trials); the other incentivizing grant applicants to implement program models/strategies backed by evidence that meets Clearinghouse standards.

Blair Hull
Matlock Capital

Robert Hoyt
Jennison Associates

David Kessler
Former FDA Commissioner

Jerry Lee
Jerry Lee Foundation

Dan Levy
Harvard University

Jodi Nelson
Bill & Melinda Gates
Foundation

We partnered with Results for America in a letter to the Department strongly supporting these proposed amendments. Our letter also offers a suggested revision which, although in the nature of refinement, may be critical to the effort's success: that its definition of "strong evidence of effectiveness" incorporate a requirement for effects that are "substantial and important" and not just statistically significant. (The letter is [linked here](#).) We'll keep you posted as this effort goes forward.

Diane Ravitch
New York University

Howard Rolston
Abt Associates

Isabel Sawhill
Brookings Institution

Martin Seligman
University of Pennsylvania

Robert Solow
Massachusetts Institute of
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- **The push for evidence-based policy has engaged some prominent partners, seeking to build high-level, bipartisan political and policy support for the effort –** which could be critical to sustaining and building on recent federal advances. [Results for America](#) and the Brookings Institution's [Hamilton Project](#) are hosting a forum on April 17 – [Investing in What Works: The Importance of Evidence-Based Policymaking](#) – that will include U.S. Senator Rob Portman (R-OH); U.S. Senator Mark Warner (D-VA); Alan Krueger, Chair of the President's Council on Economic Advisers; and former Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin; among others. The forum will take place in Washington DC at the Liaison Capitol Hill Hotel, from 1:00-3:30 on April 17.
- **Our open online workshop on evidence-based policy has attracted strong usage since its launch in December.** Entitled [How to Read Research Findings to Distinguish Evidence-Based Programs from Everything Else: User-Friendly Tools for Policy Officials and Stakeholders](#), the workshop consists of two brief video series (available [here](#) at no charge, 90 minutes total), followed by eight optional weekly conference calls providing hands-on experience reviewing actual studies (costing \$150 for all eight sessions). The next set of conference calls starts the week of May 20. To participate, please contact Allison Taylor (ataylor@coalition4evidence.org, 202-713-9553).

- **We're very pleased to welcome a new Advisory Board member – Jodi Nelson, Director of Strategy, Measurement and Evaluation at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.** Jodi's brief bio is [posted here](#).

We hope this update is helpful. Any thoughts or suggestions you have for our future work would be much appreciated.

Please visit the Coalition's [Help Desk](#), providing impartial expert advice and an open online workshop in evidence-based reform. The Coalition is grateful to the MacArthur Foundation for its funding support for our work in this area.