Detroit Education Research Partnership Postdoctoral Fellowship
Call for Applicants

Postdoctoral Fellowship Description

The Detroit Education Research Partnership (DERP) is a research-practice partnership between Wayne State University’s College of Education, local school districts, and community-based coalition Every School Day Counts Detroit. DERP seeks a postdoctoral fellow for a two-year appointment (contingent on successful completion of the first year), under the supervision of Dr. Sarah Winchell Lenhoff. DERP works in partnership with schools, community organizations, and policymakers to identify the key problems that impede improvement in Detroit schools and design research studies to inform solutions. The DERP Postdoctoral Fellow (Postdoc) will join a diverse team of faculty, graduate research assistants, and community researchers who are committed to conducting high quality research to meet the needs of Detroit’s students, families, and schools. We use continuous improvement methods to strengthen our research and partnership processes and support our partners in using research to improve. We seek a Postdoc who is committed to advancing equity and justice and will continue to learn alongside us how to do that work ethically in partnership with the communities we serve.

As a collaborative, interdisciplinary team, we use confidential administrative data, participatory methods, as well as qualitative interview and observational data from school staff, community members, and families, to co-construct research evidence for academic, community, and policymaker audiences. Our funded research seeks to document the root causes of student absenteeism in Detroit (where more than half of students are chronically absent from school each year) and work with our partners to design, pilot, and study initiatives to improve the conditions for school attendance. In addition, we have ongoing projects related to early literacy interventions, equity and school choice, and the school-prison nexus.

The DERP Postdoctoral Fellow will have primary responsibility in our research on attendance initiatives in Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD), including a mixed-methods study of a networked improvement community among DPSCD attendance agents. The Postdoc will also have the opportunity to join an additional research project based on their interests and expertise in the areas of social justice and intersectionality, school choice, community attendance initiatives, or early literacy. About 15% of the Postdoc’s time could be dedicated to their research outside of DERP. The Postdoc would be expected to relocate to the Detroit area when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, although we will consider strong applicants who cannot be in residence but are willing to travel to Detroit several times a year.

Expected Qualifications of Postdoctoral Fellow
● Earned doctorate in education policy, administration, public policy, or a related field.
● Within two years of degree completion at start date (flexible start date between August 2021 and January 2022).
● Interest in intersectional justice in urban schools.
● Demonstrated experience in qualitative research methodology, with a preference for candidates with some quantitative research experience and an interest in mixed-methods research.

Duties May Include
● Participating in research design, data collection, analysis, and write-up on research related to attendance interventions, continuous improvement, and research partnerships.
● Leading and co-authoring articles for submission to peer-reviewed journals.
● Co-developing data collection instruments for attendance networked improvement community research study.
● Providing project management support across multiple DERP studies.
● Communicating research to community and district partners.
● Co-mentoring DERP graduate research assistants.
● Co-teaching or providing TA support in doctoral-level courses (if desired by Postdoc).

Compensation and Benefits
● The expected starting salary is $50,000 annually for a 12-month, full-time appointment.
● Generous benefits package.
● Up to $1,500 per year to support attendance at academic conferences and workshops.
● Through DERP’s membership in the National Network of Education Research-Practice Partnerships, the Postdoc will have access to monthly brown bag webinars on topics of interest to our work.
● Junior scholar support and development opportunities in the COE and university.

To apply, send a single PDF with 1) a cover letter highlighting your relevant interests and qualifications, 2) a CV, and 3) the names and contact information of three references to Dr. Sarah Winchell Lenhoff at sarah.lenhoff@wayne.edu.