
James Cowan

Education

Bachelor of Arts 2006, Seattle University, Economics and Humanities
Doctoral Studies Completed coursework at Cornell University toward a doctorate in Economics

Present Position

Researcher, American Institutes for Research (AIR) (2015–Present)

Designs and conducts empirical studies of educational policy. Research interests include teacher labor markets and the effects of school resources. Recent work has focused on teacher preparation, teacher evaluation, and postsecondary education.

Professional Experience

Co-Principal Investigator, Institute for Education Sciences, Distributional Implications of Computer-Based Testing on Students, Teachers, and Schools (2017–2019)

Helped design and implement a study that investigates mode effects on state standardized tests and their implications for the measurement of student achievement and school or teacher accountability.

Co-Principal Investigator, Institute for Education Sciences, Teacher Pipeline in Massachusetts (2017–2019)

Leads the design and implementation of a study that investigates the relationship between pre-service measures of teacher effectiveness and preparation, student achievement, and in-service performance evaluations in Massachusetts.

Principal Investigator, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Teacher Equity Gaps Analysis (2017)

Led the design and implementation of a study that investigates inequity in teacher assignments in Massachusetts.

Principal Investigator, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Massachusetts Educator Preparation and Licensure (2015–2017)

Led the design and implementation of a study that investigates variation in teacher effectiveness and retention across educator preparation programs and licensure pathways in Massachusetts.

Employment History

2012–2015 Research Consultant, Center for Education Data and Research,
University of Washington, Bothell

Professional Affiliations

American Economic Association
Association for Education Finance and Policy
Association of Public Policy and Management

Publications

Journal articles

- Backes, B., Cowan, J., Goldhaber, D., Koedel, C., Miller, L., & Xu, Z. (2018). “The Common Core conundrum: To what extent should we worry that changes to assessments and standards will affect test-based measures of teacher performance?” *Economics of Education Review*, 62, 48-65.
- Goldhaber, D., Cowan, J., & Theobald, R. (2017). Evaluating prospective teachers: testing the predictive validity of the edTPA. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 68(4), 377-393.
- Huntington-Klein, N., Cowan, J., & Goldhaber, D. (2017). Selection into online community college courses and their effect on persistence. *Research in Higher Education*, 58(3), 244-269.
- Cowan, J., Goldhaber, D., Hayes, K., & Theobald, R. (2016). Missing elements in the discussion of teacher shortages. *Educational Researcher*, 45(8), 460-462.
- Goldhaber, D., Bignell, W., Farley, A., Walch, J., & Cowan, J. (2016). Who chooses incentivized pay structures? Exploring the link between performance and preferences for compensation in the teacher labor market. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 38(2), 245-271.
- Cowan, J. & Goldhaber, D. (2016). National Board Certification and teacher effectiveness: Evidence from Washington. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 9(3), 233-258.
- Cowan, J. & Goldhaber, D. (2015). How much of a “Running Start” do dual enrollment programs give students? *Review of Higher Education*, 38(3), 425–460.
- Goldhaber, D. & Cowan, J. (2014). Excavating the teacher pipeline: Teacher training programs and teacher attrition. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 65(5), 449–462.
- Goldhaber, D., Cowan, J., & Walch, J. (2013). Is a good elementary teacher always good? Assessing teacher performance estimates across subjects. *Economics of Education Review*, 36, 216–228.

Technical reports

- Cowan, J., Goldhaber, D., & Theobald, R. (2017). *Teacher equity gaps in Massachusetts*. Malden, MA: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Cowan, J., Goldhaber, D., & Theobald, R. (2017). *Massachusetts educator preparation and licensure: Year 1 report*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.

Cowan, J., & Goldhaber, D. (2015). *Do bonuses affect teacher staffing and student achievement in high-poverty schools? Evidence from an incentive for National Board certified teachers in Washington State* (No. 2015-4). Seattle, WA: Center for Education Data and Research.

Goldhaber, D., Cowan, J., Long, M.C., & Huntington-Klein, N. (2015). *College curricular dispersion: More well rounded or less well trained?* (No. 130). Washington, D.C.: National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research.

Cowan, J., & Goldhaber, D. (2014). *Assessing the relationship between teacher performance on Washington State's ProTeach Portfolio and student test performance* (No. 2014-2). Seattle, WA: Center for Education Data and Research.

Professional Presentations

Cowan, J., Goldhaber, D. & Theobald, R. (November, 2017). *The role of school and district implementation in subjective teacher evaluation*. Paper presented at the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.

Cowan, J., Goldhaber, D. & Theobald, R. (March, 2017). *The role of school and district implementation in subjective teacher evaluation*. Paper presented at the Association for Education Finance and Policy Annual Meeting, Washington, DC.

Goldhaber, D., Cowan, J., & Theobald, R. (November, 2016). *Evaluating prospective teachers: Testing the predictive validity of the edTPA*. Paper presented at the Association of Public Policy and Management Fall Research Conference, Washington, D.C.

Cowan, J., & Goldhaber, D. (November, 2016). *School counselors and student outcomes in high school: Evidence from staff turnover*. Paper presented at the Association of Public Policy and Management Fall Research Conference, Washington, D.C.

Cowan, J., & Goldhaber, D. (March, 2016). *School counselors and student outcomes in high school: Evidence from staff turnover*. Paper presented at the Association for Education Finance and Policy Annual Meeting, Denver, CO.

Cowan, J., & Goldhaber, D. (March, 2015). *Do bonuses affect teacher staffing and student achievement in high-poverty schools? Evidence from an incentive for National Board certified teachers in Washington State*. Paper presented at the Association for Education Finance and Policy Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C.

Cowan, J., & Goldhaber, D. (March, 2014). *Assessing the relationship between teacher performance on Washington State's ProTeach Portfolio and student test performance*. Paper presented at the Professional Educator Standards Board Meeting, Everett, WA.