How are peer K-12 organizations making data-driven decisions to address their challenges?

Welcome to the second edition of the K-12 Education Market Leadership Report, Hanover Research’s (Hanover’s) annual review of the topics and issues that shaped our work over the last twelve months, as well as those we expect to address throughout the year ahead.

Within this report, you will learn how peer K-12 organizations are making data-driven decisions to address the challenges faced by all school and district leaders and practitioners in a rapidly changing field. Using data from hundreds of custom research initiatives we supported in 2014, we highlight the most common areas of focus for our work, which are indicative of the top concerns for Hanover’s K-12 partners. We take a closer look at Next Generation Learning tools and strategies; we review the changing landscape of PARCC and Smarter Balanced assessment adoption; and we present best practices in research to guide your school improvement initiatives. Throughout our report, we include case study profiles to demonstrate how innovative schools and districts have successfully translated Hanover’s research insights into action.

Finally, we highlight some of our proudest accomplishments as well as the innovations and investments we believe are making the service better for all of our partners, such as the expansion of our specialist research teams, the development of new tools like our program evaluation webinars and interactive climate survey data dashboard reports, and the successful launch of our new Independent School Administration Practice service for private school partners.

On behalf of Hanover’s K-12 Education Team, we hope that you find this report valuable and insightful. We continuously strive to better serve the K-12 community, and welcome your feedback on the research support that would be of interest to your school or district.

Regards,

Cam Wall
Vice President, Content
Hanover Research
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Who is advancing the discourse on education innovation and reform?
We know K-12 education

and how to address the research questions that matter to schools and districts across the country. By analyzing the hundreds of custom research requests commissioned by our partners throughout the past year, Hanover uncovered a number of trends with respect to the initiatives K-12 administrators prioritized in 2014.

who do we work with?

Our partners are a diverse collection of independent schools and local, regional, and state education agencies that span 36 states and the District of Columbia.

partners by organization type

- Public Districts: 85%
- Independent Schools: 7%
- Other Education Agencies: 8%

partners by student enrollment

- <5k: 20%
- 5-<10k: 18%
- 10-<20k: 18%
- 20-<30k: 12%
- 30-<40k: 7%
- >40k: 25%
what are their research priorities?

In standard Hanover practice, each research request we receive is categorized according to topic and research type. When analyzing our body of research from 2014, we delved into these categories to identify not only broad themes across the major priority areas of Instructional Integrity, Resource Management, Student Success, and Stakeholder Engagement, but also the top research topics within these themes.

Approximately 80 percent of our 2014 requests focused on some aspect of Instructional Integrity (learning assessment or curriculum topics) or Resource Management (school and district operations and strategic planning issues).

The research requested by our independent school partners varied from that of our public district partners, reflecting their strong interest in engagement and satisfaction and student recruitment. Half of the projects for independent school partners consisted of survey design and analysis of student, parent, faculty, and alumni responses.
trending topics within each priority area*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Area</th>
<th>Education Success</th>
<th>Student Integrity</th>
<th>Instructional Integrity</th>
<th>Resource Management</th>
<th>Stakeholder Engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instructional Integrity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and Assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td>43%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Development</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed Tech</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource Management</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Success</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Populations</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College and Career Readiness</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Support and Intervention</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support and Intervention</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to Intervention</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stakeholder Engagement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student, Parent, Staff, and Community Engagement and Satisfaction (Other)</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Climate</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Some projects addressed several of these sub-topics simultaneously, which is why the sum of the request percentages exceeds 100. These percentages represent the proportion of research reports within each priority area that addressed similar themes.
spotlight on resource management

Resource management was a key priority area for both public and private education entities, as reflected in the volume of research requests we received to inform planning efforts and streamline operational efficiencies.

common resource management research questions

- **The Impact of School Calendars and Scheduling** – Will a delayed high school start time impact student health, well-being, and academic achievement?
- **Determining Optimal Facility Design** – What is the Makerspace movement, and how can we transform school spaces to foster collaborative learning?
- **Benchmarking Professional Learning Time** – What scheduling models do peers use to provide time for teacher collaboration?
- **Technology Integration and Communication Parent Survey** – What are the levels of technology access for students in our district, and how can we use this information to develop device policies for one-to-one program implementation?

expert insight

Blair Milam  
*Managing Director of Hanover’s K-12 Education Practices*

“Certainly, education leaders have always been cognizant of the need to justify their expenditures. The focus on student outcomes over the past twenty years bears witness to that. What is new, and therefore challenging to education leaders, is the need to prove the value of a specific approach. **Documenting impact requires a defined plan, mission, and goals so that educators can allocate resources accordingly.** By examining school operation data and stakeholder perceptions, Hanover has helped administrators assess whether investments in educational progress are being made in the most financially sustainable way.”
how did we address these research needs?

In 2014, the majority of our projects called for best practices research, while interest in surveys, in-depth interviews, and data analyses continued to grow. Increases in primary research was fueled by an uptick in school climate survey requests, while the rise of data analysis projects occurred in tandem with our focus on program evaluation, as the majority of these projects require the analysis of student outcomes data provided by the school or district.

Looking ahead to 2015, we plan to further develop our primary research and data analysis services and anticipate fielding a larger volume of requests for the following methodologies:

- **In-depth interviews** intended to gain insight into the practices of peer and best practice school districts around topics such as professional development, teacher leadership, turnaround school strategies, student wellness services, and accelerated learning models.

- **Predictive analytics** for identifying at-risk student populations or determining academic indicators strongly aligned with college and career readiness.

*Some projects involved multiple methodologies, which is why the sum of the request percentages exceeds 100.*
K-12 administrators’ key research priorities will remain fairly constant in 2015. On behalf of our partners, Hanover will continue to provide support as schools and districts address these needs while also exploring new areas of focus.

**want more trending research?**

Hanover partners have access to our Education Library, a resource of over 2,100 syndicated reports — including these top downloaded reports of 2014 — completed at the request of partners. [Learn more about our library benefits.](#)

1. Disciplinary Alternatives to Suspension
2. Best Practices in Math Interventions
4. Growth Mindset in Schools
5. Best Practices in Instructional Coaching
6. Best Practices for AP Programs
7. Professional Development for Technology Integration
8. Effective Board and Superintendent Collaboration
9. Programs for Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders
10. Equitable Discipline through Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
Next Generation Learning encompasses much more than simply introducing technology into the classroom. Rather, today’s instructional tools extend learning beyond the classroom into all aspects of students’ lives. We project that in 2015, K-12 educators will continue to employ strategies and tools that personalize learning, placing the student at the center of his or her educational experience and on the path to college and career.

**Learning anywhere** – Transforming the action of learning into a 24/7 activity through the widespread adoption of education resources available via smart phones, tablets, adaptive learning tools, virtual reality platforms, and video games.

**E-portfolios** – Creating an electronic continuum of work that captures student performance on traditional types of assessments, as well as evidence of project-based learning, and the development of 21st century skills.

**Gaming to learn** – Integrating play-based learning concepts to benefit cognitive development, increase students’ attention spans, and improve overall engagement.

**Research-based technology investments** – Prioritizing data-driven evaluations of past and future technology investments by:

- Developing front- and back-end data capture mechanisms to gather information regarding the impact of technologies on teacher effectiveness and student achievement;
- Using data to rigorously evaluate technology investments; and
- Holding vendors accountable for the teaching and learning outcomes they promote.

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How will the K-12 sector continue the Next Generation Learning movement to ensure success for every learner?

In order to use Next Generation Learning strategies to ensure student success, schools and districts need evidence-based strategies to incorporate new technologies and teaching strategies into district policy, even as they evaluate the effectiveness of new and future technology investments.

Follow Hanover throughout the coming year as we provide our partners with critical information on evidence-based practices and evolving trends in EdTech, professional development, instructional techniques, and learning environments.

Uncover more successful Next Generation Learning strategies by viewing our presentation from the 2014 Education Research and Development Institute Conference, or read more projected 2015 trends in our report, *Emerging and Future Trends in K-12 Education.*
Established with the goal of creating evidence-based standards that would be consistent across all states, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have faced both praise and opposition since their initial development. The growing wave of resistance to the Common Core is changing the landscape of CCSS approval, adoption, and repeal throughout the nation.

Although 43 states have fully adopted the Common Core, the CCSS are under threat in a number of states where growing camps of opposition are gaining legislative attention and the power to either overturn states’ adoption of the standards or, more frequently, their adoption of one of the major Common Core-aligned assessments. Since 2012, the number of states administering the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Assessment has dropped 46 percent, from 24 states to 13, while the number of states implementing the Smarter Balanced Consortium Assessment has dropped 25 percent, from 28 states to 21.

For individual districts and regional education agencies, these state-level decisions regarding adoption of the Common Core, PARCC, and/or the Smarter Balanced Assessment have critical implications for teaching and learning.
To help our partners understand these state-level trends, Hanover created a map to articulate changes to Common Core adoption status and the use of Common Core-aligned assessments. These changes will undoubtedly evolve across the coming year, raising questions for educators about the most effective instructional methods and assessments within the national, state, and local context.

Map current as of January 31, 2015
School improvement planning is a systematic, data-driven process for planning and evaluating improvement over time. Distinct from institutional research and auditing, improvement planning aims to reduce the gap between a school’s current level of performance and its potential performance.

At its most effective, school improvement planning is a dynamic practice that engages data and people in the improvement process. However, many plans fail to address the processes for improvement, instead focusing solely on the outcomes of improvement.

To help districts use school improvement planning most effectively, Hanover reviewed the literature and spoke with education experts to determine not only what administrators should consider when developing their school improvement planning framework, but also how to achieve each specific improvement goal.

1. **set the foundation**

   **uncover areas for improvement**

   Conducting a needs assessment will identify current gaps and their driving factors.

   - **Emphasize student learning and performance** over specific teachers’ practices and actions.
   - **Compare different schools within the system** to identify trends in school climate and culture, curriculum and instruction, leadership, family and community engagement, professional development and staff capacity, and assessment techniques.
   - **Use third parties** to evaluate school data, instruction, internal processes and procedures, and external policies or community factors that may impact success.

   **set rigorous yet attainable goals**

   Focusing efforts on a few key goals supports positive morale and continued improvement.

   - **Target two to five priority areas**. Reading achievement, math achievement, and school climate are common areas of improvement plan focus. It is helpful to select priority areas based on existing school and district initiatives to prevent stakeholders from being overwhelmed by new concepts.
   - **Align your long-term goals with the academic calendar**, but divide short-term targets by quarter, month, and even week.
2. develop an improvement culture

**establish support structures**  Engaging staff as partners in improvement ensures buy-in and engagement with the process.

- **Create leadership groups** comprising of the principal, assistant principal(s), and teacher advocates.
- **Build district implementation taskforces** of 8-12 individuals that are responsible for communicating with schools, and delivering ongoing support through site visits and training sessions.
- **Provide access to professional development opportunities** before launching your plan to ensure principals are prepared to exert transformational, instructional, and strategic leadership.

**use data to drive decision-making**  Implementing, measuring, and assessing school improvement across a variety of metrics provides critical information for improvement plans.

- **Understand student learning trends** by analyzing assessment data, curriculum delivery, social and emotional learning, and attendance and drop-out rates.
- **Identify strengths and challenges in your school climate** by surveying parents, teachers, and students, as well as the community.
- **Develop benchmarks to monitor plan implementation** by setting and measuring pre-determined success metrics.

**strategy in action**

Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) developed a stakeholder taskforce when embarking on its middle school improvement initiative. Hanover Research distributed best practices research to help all taskforce members gain a common, research-driven understanding of priority areas throughout the school improvement planning process.

“The Middle Schools for Tomorrow Workgroup was brought together to allow parents, students, teachers, and the larger community to take an active role in crafting their vision of the future for ACPS middle schools. The workgroup was asked to create their idealized middle school, take a critical look at current practices within Alexandria middle schools, and ultimately lay the groundwork for how the division should move strategically forward.

Hanover Research, in conjunction with school division staff, were integral in this work by supplying best practices research around identified topics, crafting and administering a survey, providing quantitative and qualitative data analysis, and responding to stakeholder feedback throughout the six-month process. **Decisions are only as good as the information used in forming them, and the research and data analysis provided allowed the stakeholder group to make the highest quality decisions not only in reaction to where our middle schools had been, but also more importantly where they must go.**”

- Clinton Page, Chief Accountability Officer, ACPS
3. act upon improvement

**respond to progress**
Conducting continuous evaluations allows administrators to react to successes and failures in real time.

- Conduct teacher, parent, and student surveys annually or bi-annually to inform the implementation process.
- Evaluate how the district is adhering to the processes mapped out in the plan rather than focusing solely on student achievement.
- Make data-driven adjustments to school budgeting, staffing, instructional, and community involvement policies as needed.

**communicate with your stakeholders**
Being transparent about change amplifies credibility and community buy-in for your plan.

- Promote “quick wins” to your stakeholders when data indicate positive results.
- Survey internal audiences to measure the impact of professional development and identify the support structures needed for effective plan integration in the classroom.

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**Palo Alto Unified School District**
Palo Alto Unified School District applied results from a recent Hanover strategic planning survey administered to parents, teachers, students, and district staff in order to develop its highly-praised Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). Through the survey, Hanover identified that nearly 50 percent of district stakeholders were only somewhat satisfied with school support for under-performing students. This finding prompted administrators to adapt their accountability plan and develop focused learning strategies that target under-performing students. **Stakeholder feedback led to quick and direct action.**

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**expert insight**

Sarah Van Duyn
Managing Content Director of Hanover’s K-12 Education Practices

“Effective school improvement planning hinges upon the ability of districts to use data to understand their district or school, set goals, and evaluate progress against these goals. Yet many administrators struggle to implement a systematic process to collect, analyze, and communicate with stakeholders the right data to catalyze school improvement. To aid in this process, Hanover developed a worksheet outlining important research questions and common data points for making data-driven school improvement plans.”

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**innovations**

- **Conduct** teacher, parent, and student surveys annually or bi-annually to inform the implementation process.
- **Evaluate** how the district is adhering to the processes mapped out in the plan rather than focusing solely on student achievement.
- **Make** data-driven adjustments to school budgeting, staffing, instructional, and community involvement policies as needed.

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**view worksheet here**
Below, we present several planning questions and next step considerations for your school improvement teams to evaluate when progressing through the different stages of plan implementation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Considerations</th>
<th>Phase Completion Checklist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>set the foundation</strong></td>
<td>Is the foundation of your school improvement plan...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Which two to five priority areas does your school or district want to target?</td>
<td>□ ...student-focused?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Why are these areas a priority?</td>
<td>□ ...holistic and objective?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Who is the key driver behind this idea? (e.g., school board, superintendent, parents)</td>
<td>□ ...manageable to achieve?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What data do you already have to inform goal setting? What data will you need to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gather in order to monitor progress and determine success?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can you leverage any current or past efforts to support planning implementation?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e.g., resources, initiatives, policies)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>develop an improvement culture</strong></td>
<td>Have you developed the support structure to ensure...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Who are the important stakeholders that need to be involved throughout the planning</td>
<td>□ ...plan leadership is distributed across groups and schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>process?</td>
<td>and leaders have the professional development support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How will you decide which individuals will be involved in these planning groups?</td>
<td>needed to succeed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is this selection process fair?</td>
<td>□ ...the voices of key stakeholder groups are accounted for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How often will your planning groups meet?</td>
<td>throughout the planning process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have you established how tasks will be accomplished and who the responsible parties are?</td>
<td>□ ...a feedback loop exists to evaluate student outcomes and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do you have the data collection processes needed to move forward with plan</td>
<td>obtain stakeholder feedback?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implementation? (Review Hanover’s supplementary data worksheet for guidance on</td>
<td>□ ...Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are defined and the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>variables, data sources, and more)</td>
<td>appropriate contacts are prepared to capture the data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>act upon improvement</strong></td>
<td>needed to evaluate them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How are you planning to communicate progress with your community?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Who are the stakeholders that you need to communicate with?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Which channels will be the most appropriate for sending these messages? (e.g., online,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>print)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What do you want to communicate?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How often will you send these updates?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What are your short- and long-term communication goals?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How do you intend to handle any community opposition? Who will respond, and in what</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forum?</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over the course of your improvement plan timeline, are you prepared to...                  |
□ ...track success metrics?                                                                |
□ ...proactively and reactively respond to the data you receive?                           |
□ ...launch a communication plan to inform stakeholders of progress?
Lake Washington School District (LWSD) is a high-performing public school district with 53 schools and over 26,000 students that is located east of Seattle, Washington. LWSD partnered with Hanover Research in 2012 to expand its internal capacity for research and program development, use Hanover’s survey capabilities to gather qualitative feedback from district stakeholders, and identify best practices in curriculum implementation.

After LWSD’s 2013 summer school session concluded, administrators sought to make concrete and data-driven adjustments to their upcoming year’s summer school programming. To accomplish this goal, the district looked to Hanover to design, administer, and analyze a survey to students, teachers, and parents who participated in the 2013 Summer School Program.

In 2014, the district’s Summer School Program generated a different student, parent, and teacher experience through the implementation of changes directed by the previous year’s survey results.

By partnering with Hanover Research, LWSD was able to:

- Increase the timeliness of parent communications regarding the Summer School Program;
- Ensure that summer school teachers had the current district-adopted instructional materials and resources they needed to maximize student success; and
- Review attendance policies that may have a negative impact on summer school student success rates.

Lake Washington’s partnership with Hanover Research has strengthened the credibility of our district’s strategic work.”

- Matt Manobianco, Associate Superintendent Student and Professional Learning Services

Learn more about LWSD’s iterative survey initiative by reading the full case study on our K-12 Insights page.
Northwest Independent School District (NISD) operates 27 campuses and is one of the fastest growing school districts in the state of Texas. The district began its partnership with Hanover Research in fall 2012 in order to expand the administration’s program evaluation capacity and amplify pathways and support structures for college and career readiness.

Administrators at NISD hypothesized that a missing link existed between current college and career readiness programming and the district’s effectiveness in enabling postsecondary student success. To test this hypothesis and uncover potential new strategies for bridging this programming gap, NISD collaborated with Hanover on a three step initiative.

1. Benchmark Current Practices
2. Build Out College and Career Support Services
3. Identify Key Performance Indicators

NISD’s motto is “Every Student Future Ready,” a goal it will continue to fulfill as the college and career readiness initiative progresses. Hanover’s contributions in the first phase of this iterative research process helped the district strategize how to enhance current programming through the establishment of the Director of College and Career Readiness position.

As the district is projected to grow by an additional 11,000 students over the next eight years, the NISD team plans to apply Hanover’s research to inform upcoming future-readiness needs.

“[Working with Hanover] will continue to answer big questions for our district. Given the current scope of our program, we can determine if our efforts are leading to success.”

- Kyle Seipp, Director of College and Career Readiness

Learn more about NISD’s efforts to apply data to improve student readiness by reading the full case study on our K-12 Insights page.
talent

We continue to build a robust team of thought leaders and research innovators — helping us earn recognition from the Washington Business Journal as the D.C. area’s 16th fastest growing company of 2014. As we have grown, we have also deepened our commitment to quality and innovation and invested additional resources to attract and retain the highest quality talent.

- In 2014, we created a new research team focused exclusively on serving our K-12 partners.
- We expanded our team of education-focused primary researchers. These analysts focus exclusively on securing in-depth interviews with peer districts and education experts.
- 83 percent of quantitative analysts hired in 2014 hold doctoral degrees in a quantitative field. 100 percent of quantitative analysts hired over the last two years hold advanced degrees — a testament to the excellence of Hanover’s data solutions.

service

We are dedicated to delivering the highest quality service, and we have the track record to prove it. In addition to growing our analyst teams, we nearly doubled the size of our account management team in 2014. Our investment in client service allows for closer relationships between our partners and their dedicated points of contact at Hanover.

With respect to research delivery, we continue to invest in the most dynamic and cutting edge platforms to present our analyses — helping schools and districts better visualize, model, and interpret report data.
researcher spotlights

The following representative biographies showcase the experience of several 2014 additions to Hanover’s K-12 research team.

**Anthony Buenafe**  
*Content Director*

Mr. Buenafe is a former Data and Research Manager from the District of Columbia’s Office of the State Superintendent of Education, where he oversaw compliance and programmatic quality related to Race to the Top. In this role, he analyzed school improvement plans and facilitated continuous development of school turnaround strategies. He was also a Pew Charitable Trusts Leadership Fellow for the Pre-K Now Program, a Child Find specialist with DC Public Schools, and a Graduate Intern at Research for Action. Mr. Buenafe obtained his M.S. in Education Policy from the University of Pennsylvania.

**Deogracias, Ph.D.**  
*Former Educator and School District Accountability Analyst*

Dr. Deogracias comes to Hanover with a rich experience in education as an academic researcher, analyst, program evaluation instructor, and classroom teacher. Prior to her work at Hanover, she was an Accountability Analyst for Alexandria City Public Schools. Within this role, Dr. Deogracias led in-service trainings for school staff and administrators in the use of testing, assessment, and evaluation data. Jee received her Ph.D. in Education Policy from the University of Maryland.

**Wael Moussa, Ph.D.**  
*Research Consultant*

Dr. Moussa joined Hanover in early 2014 after working as an Education Research Analyst at the New York State Education Department. In this role, he estimated student growth and value-added models, conducted impact analyses, performed beta modeling for future implementation, and provided quality control for data reporting. Dr. Moussa is affiliated with the American Economic Association and Association for Education Finance and Policy, speaks four languages, and is well versed in using advanced statistics programs. He holds a B.A. in Economics from the American University of Beirut, and a Ph.D. in Economics from Syracuse University.
We formally launched our Independent School Administration Practice (ISAP) in March of 2014. An expansion of our traditional K-12 education service, ISAP provides research support catered specifically to the needs of the nation’s independent schools.

Heads of school, senior administrators, and board trustees enlist our ISAP services to address the unique challenges faced by private schools, such as evaluating tuition elasticity, forecasting student enrollments, improving stakeholder perceptions, and assessing curricular effectiveness in 21st century skill development.

Hanover’s ISAP research solutions draw from our experience not only in the K-12 sector, but across the higher education, for-profit, and non-profit sectors. The following examples highlight the ways in which we have applied our full range of capabilities to address the needs of our private school partners.

**Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis**
- Impact of Tablet PC Programs
- Math and Science Course Sequence Assessment
- Predictive Modeling: Academic Program Success
- Tuition Sensitivity and Elasticity Analysis
- Blended Learning and Technology Integration Practices
- International Student Recruitment Best Practices
- Benchmarking Grade 6 Admissions Processes
- Case Studies in Implementing Gifted Student Support Services
- Stakeholder Perception and Brand Awareness Surveys
- Qualitative Analysis of Alumni Surveys
- Parent Giving In-Depth Interviews
- Staff Salary and Benefits Benchmarking Interviews

**Secondary Research**

**Primary Research**

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Learn more about Hanover’s research solutions for private and independent schools by contacting info@hanoverresearch.com
methodological developments

peer benchmarking

We take the guesswork out of peer identification. Hanover’s Peer Similarity Index generates statistically precise lists of national, regional, and local peer school districts. Derived from a database of over 10,000 U.S. public school districts, our peer identification model includes district characteristics, geographic and economic indicators, and data from high-level revenue and expenditure streams. This model presents our partners with a validated list of peer districts to use in benchmarking performance and identifying effective instructional, operational, and administrative strategies.

program evaluation

We have expanded the scope of our program evaluation capabilities nationwide. The number of program evaluations partners commissioned Hanover to execute increased significantly from 2013 to 2014, with 60 percent of these projects including a data analysis component. From examining the impact of state policies like Texas’ House Bill 5, to evaluating purchased and “home-grown” intervention programs, to assessing one-to-one technology programs and programs for English Language Learners, our evaluations cover a wide range of topics, areas, and organizations.

Furthermore, Hanover has created a suite of program evaluation tools to help K-12 organizations strategically approach evaluation and develop a culture of research.

- Learn what data to measure when evaluating school and district programs in our four-part recorded webinar series, Using Data for Program Evaluation and Improvement.
- Execute each stage of the program evaluation process with precision by applying insights from our white paper, Maximizing Program Effectiveness through Informed Research.
- Facilitate your program evaluation planning process using our interactive framework and planning worksheet.
The following is a selection of people we follow, blogs and media publications we read, and conferences we plan to attend to stay abreast of ideas and trends emerging across the K-12 education landscape.

Follow us on Twitter @HanoverK12, read along on our K-12 Insights page, and meet us at upcoming conferences to join in on the conversation.

**follow**

*Consortium of School Networking @CoSN*  
CoSN is a major resource for K-12 technology leaders, serving more than 10 million students in districts nationwide.

*Catherine Gewertz @cgewertz*  
Catherine provides fresh news on standards, curriculum, and assessment with a special focus on urban education.

**Monitor #EdChat**  
To keep up-to-date on the trending topics across the education sector.

**Top Education Tweets @topedutweets**  
TET’s mission is to follow the most relevant education Twitter accounts and share the best content with others.

*SmartBrief Education @SBEducation*  
SmartBrief encourages followers to use its account as a forum for exchanging ideas and practices in education.

*Cindy Johanson @cinio*  
As Executive Director of Edutopia, Cindy harnesses her passions for learning strategies and digital media to fuel the organization’s growth.

*Matthew Lynch @lynch39083*  
Dr. Lynch is an expert on education equity, reform, and innovation, frequently publishing articles on his website, “The Edvocate,” and in other outlets.

This Week in Education  
thisweekineducation.com  
As a former teacher, researcher, and Senate education staffer, Alexander Russo prioritizes holistic views on the latest in education and policy news.

The Quick and the Ed  
thequickanded.com  
The Education Sector team at American Institutes for Research provides in-depth analysis across a broad range of education issues.

Education Writer’s Association  
ewa.org  
EWA is an organization of education writers, and its blog includes virtually any education topic covered in the media today.

Jay P. Greene’s Blog  
jaygreene.com  
Jay’s research on education policy is regularly cited in major newspapers and policy journals. Join the millions of other viewers who have visited his blog.

Always Learning  
blog.pearson.edu  
Pearson's blog consists of its company’s top thought leaders who predict trends in digital learning across the world.
join the
conversation
k-12 education influencers

The Atlantic, Education
theatlantic.com/education
The Atlantic provides breaking news developing throughout the education sector and around the world.

EdTechDigest edtechdigest.wordpress.com
EdTech highlights tech trends, interviews experts and district leaders, and reviews cool new tools in the field of K-12 education.

School and Planning Management
webrpm.com
SPM focuses on K-12 operations and infrastructure topics such as facility management, safety and security, technology, and finance.

eSchool News eschoolnews.com
eSchoolNews is a reliable source for keeping up-to-date on how technology continues to impact the education sector.

Education Next educationnext.org
EducationNext focuses on evidence-based research to steer transformative advancements in education reform.

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75th Annual Conference
nsba
National School Boards Association’s Annual Conference
nsba.org/conference
March 21-23, 2015
Nashville, TN

Education Week Leaders to Learn From
leaders.edweek.org/
March 18, 2015
Washington, DC

attend

ISTE 2015
International Society for Technology in Education’s Annual Conference
isteconference.org/2015
June 28-July 1, 2015
Philadelphia, PA

National Conference on Education
The School Superintendents Association’s National Conference on Education
ncaasa.org
February 26-28, 2015
San Diego, CA

Council of Chief State School Officers
Council of Chief State School Officer’s Annual Policy Forum
ccsso.org/News_and_Events/Meetings_and_Events.html
November 19-21, 2015
Charlotte, NC
resources and acknowledgments

We encourage you to explore Hanover’s K-12 Insights webpage, located at hanoverresearch.com/k12. We constantly update our site with best practice reports, popular research, education news, and white papers illustrating ways to address key challenges in the K-12 landscape – such as these top trending posts from the past year.

**Top Report Downloads of 2014**

1. [Maximizing Program Effectiveness through Informed Research](#)
2. [Critical Academic Indicators](#)
3. [Developing a Maximum-Impact Response to Intervention Program](#)

**Most Read Blog Posts of 2014**

1. [Cost and Benefits of the Year-Round Calendar System](#)
2. [Six Basic Steps of Program Evaluation Planning](#)
3. [Classroom Evolutions: The Impact, Implications, and Implementation of Personalized Learning](#)

Hanover’s K-12 Insights page is also where the content referenced throughout this document is housed. At this location you may access the following documents and postings:

- Research Trends of 2014 (pg 3)
- Education Library Benefits (pg 8)
- Next Generation Learning Presentation (pg 9)
- Emerging and Future Trends in K-12 Education (pg 9)
- School Improvement Planning Data Worksheet (pg 15)
- Lake Washington School District Case Study (pg 16)
- Northwest Independent School District Case Study (pg 17)
- Program Evaluation Resources (pg 21)

thank you

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- Lake Washington School District
- Northwest Independent School District
- Palo Alto Unified School District

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