Partnering with Durham Public Schools for research is focus of April 22 meeting

Opportunity for Duke researchers to learn about schools' interests

By Jana A. Alexander

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DURHAM, NC -- Duke researchers studying educational issues often want to work with nearby schools. That’s where the Duke University School Research Partnership (SRP) Office can help.

The upcoming Duke-DPS School Partnership Research Meeting provides a good opportunity for researchers to learn about the research questions that are most important to Durham Public Schools (DPS) and for school personnel to hear about researchers’ interests.

The meeting is Wednesday, April 22, from 9:30 a.m. to noon in Bay A of the Erwin Square Mill Building, 2024 W. Main St. Duke faculty and staff interested in conducting research with DPS are encouraged to attend, and should register by April 15 at www.childandfamilypolicy.duke.edu (Upcoming Events).

“Our goal is to facilitate mutually beneficial relationships between Duke researchers and the schools,” said David Rabiner, faculty director of the SRP Office.

The SRP Office has assisted researchers in placing more than a dozen studies examining a range of issues, including student performance, peer influence on adolescents, teacher recruitment and retention, race, ethnicity and culture, and educational policy.

One recent study surveyed beginning teachers to better understand factors related to teacher turnover. The research found that principal leadership and teachers’ perceptions of school climate were related to teachers’ decisions to remain in the profession, in the district and at the school. The study was led by Susan Wynn, director of the Secondary Teacher Preparation Program in The Program in Education, and Erika Patall, a graduate student in the Department of Psychology and Neuroscience.

Another study examined the effects of a program to enhance the transition to kindergarten by having teachers conduct a home visit with their students at the beginning of the year. Results indicate that such visits benefit teachers, students and families. This study was done by Amy Schulting, a doctoral student in psychology, and Kenneth Dodge, the William McDougall Professor of Public Policy Studies.

Formed in 2006, the SRP Office is in its third year and is an integral part of the work of the Center for Child and Family Policy. Faculty and graduate students seeking assistance for placing research in the schools are encouraged to contact Rabiner at (919) 613-9304 or drabiner@duke.edu.