

# THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIOLOGY of EDUCATION

## SECTION OF THE AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION WINTER 2005

(January 21, 2005)

(Current and past issues available at <http://www.asanet.org/soe>)

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### A NOTE FROM THE SECTION CHAIR, JAMES ROSENBAUM

Dear SOE Section:

The ideas advanced by the Sociology of Education have found their way into national policy. It is remarkable how this legislation incorporates two key concerns pioneered by our discipline: a focus on student outcomes and disaggregating outcomes for different ethnic groups. Unfortunately, other NCLB mandates are largely unexamined, so the section has identified NCLB as an appropriate topic for further analysis.

The NCLB initiative will be continued this year. Alan Sadovnik, Kathy Borman, Kevin Dougherty, and I are organizing a second conference on the topic, which will be held on the day before ASA begins (our section's meetings will be on the first day of ASA). Please send paper proposals to Alan Sadovnik at [sadovnik@andromeda.rutgers.edu](mailto:sadovnik@andromeda.rutgers.edu) by **February 15, 2005**. I personally hope that this conference is a way for us to think about the various kinds of contributions our field can make to understanding educational policy more generally. I think this can sharpen our concepts and improve policy.

At the 2005 ASA annual meeting, the section will have its usual three paper sessions and one roundtable session, chaired by Amy Binder and Rob Warren. In addition, Annette Lareau was appointed by ASA to chair the Sociology of Education sessions. You are encouraged to submit your papers to Annette, as your first choice. The more good papers she gets, the greater chance for her to argue for more sessions. Last year Ros Mickelson got 11 sessions. As usual, submissions are through the electronic submission process on the ASA web site.

The section's Willard Waller Award committee is chaired by Barbara Heyns. The David Lee Stevenson Graduate Student Paper Award Committee is chaired by Sam Lucas. Please send them nominations by **February 2, 2005**. Richard Arum is chairing the committee to nominate officers for 2006.

Since the US Department of Education abruptly decided to stop funding our webpage without any advanced notice, Carl Schmitt ([carl.schmitt@ed.gov](mailto:carl.schmitt@ed.gov)) has taken on the task of mastering the technicalities of keeping the web page going. It still is not up-to-date, so notices continue to be primarily accessible through the listserv. Hopefully, the web page will be caught up very soon.

Due to all of your efforts, but particularly due to Gary Dworkin's efforts, the SOE section is very strong. We have 717 members at last year's count, 83 away from getting another session. When you renew for ASA, be sure to renew your membership in SOE. Our increased membership has led to our getting many more sessions, and has given us some greater influence when we make requests. If we can keep that up, we increase the opportunities for sharing our research. Join, urge others to join, and faculty with grants should try to help their students to join.

**CALL FOR PAPERS: SOE Section No Child Left Behind Conference  
Annual Meeting, Philadelphia  
August 12, 2005**

Organizers:

Alan R. Sadovnik, Rutgers University  
Kathryn Borman, University of South Florida  
Kevin Dougherty, Columbia University  
James Rosenbaum, Northwestern University

As a follow-up to the successful NCLB mini-conference at the 2004 Meetings in San Francisco, the ASA Sociology of Education Section will hold a one-day follow up meeting on the day before the ASA meetings in Philadelphia. Organized around the themes analyzed at the first conference, as well as additional ones, this conference will examine what we know about federal involvement and NCLB, what we need to know, and provide sociological analyses of the important questions raised by participants in the 2004 roundtables. Given NCLB's explicit goal of reducing the race and social class achievement gap and the fact that the meeting is in Philadelphia, whose school system is under state control and undergoing restructuring, one of the foci of this conference will be the effects of federal involvement on local schools; we will use Philadelphia school reform as one of the case studies.

Following the conference, the organizers will edit a volume on federal involvement, NCLB and the reduction of the achievement gap. Palgrave/Macmillan Publishers, where Alan Sadovnik co-edits the Palgrave Series in Urban Education, and Rowman and Littlefield Publishers have expressed interest in publishing the book.

Papers should provide research evidence on what we know, what we need to know and provide a sociological analysis of the issue. Proposals for any of the seven sessions of no more than five pages should be sent as an electronic attachment to Alan Sadovnik at [sadovnik@andromeda.rutgers.edu](mailto:sadovnik@andromeda.rutgers.edu) by **February 15, 2005**. Papers outside these specific topics will also be considered. Papers selected for inclusion by the organizing committee must be completed and submitted to Alan Sadovnik no later than June 1, 2005.

**2005 Conference Organization**

*Keynote Address*  
9:00-9:50

I. Urban School Reform and the Reduction of the Achievement Gap: Federal Involvement, NCLB and its Place in Philadelphia School Reform

James Nevels, Chair, Philadelphia School Reform Commission and Swarthmore Group (Invited)

*10:00-11:20*

II. Accountability and Assessment Issues

(Two papers presented followed by comments from a discussant and open discussion.)

***Concurrent Sessions***

*11:30-12:50*

III. Curriculum and Instruction Issues

(Two papers presented followed by comments from a discussant and open discussion.)

IV. Parental Involvement Issues

(Two papers presented followed by comments from a discussant and open discussion.)

*1:00-2:00 Lunch*

***Concurrent Sessions***

*2:00-3:20*

V. High Quality Teachers Issues

(Two papers presented followed by comments from a discussant and open discussion.)

VI. School Choice Issues

(Two papers presented followed by comments from a discussant and open discussion.)

***Concurrent Sessions***

*3:30-4:50*

VII. Case Studies: Federal Involvement and Local School Reform

(Two papers presented followed by comments from a discussant and open discussion.)

VIII. Case Studies: International Lessons in Assessment and Accountability

(Two papers presented followed by comments from a discussant and open discussion.)

*5:00-5:50*

IX. Conclusion: Federal Involvement, NCLB and the Reduction of the Achievement Gap

(Discussion Paper followed by open discussion.)



## **ANNOUNCEMENTS: Nominations for the 2005 Stevenson and Waller Awards**

### **David Lee Stevenson Graduate Student Paper Award**

The Sociology of Education section presents this annual award for an outstanding paper written by a graduate student or students on a topic in education. The author (or first author) must be a graduate student at the time of submission, and all authors must have been graduate students when the paper was written. The paper may be published or under review, but all papers submitted for this award must have been written in the last two years. Papers submitted to last year's competition are not eligible. Students who are not section members are welcome to submit papers. All papers will be reviewed blindly. Please send six copies of the paper postmarked by **February 2, 2005** to:

Professor Samuel R. Lucas  
Sociology Department  
University of California-Berkeley  
410 Barrows Hall #1980  
Berkeley, California 94720-1980  
lucas@demog.berkeley.edu (not attachments)

### **Willard Waller Award for Distinguished Scholarship**

The Willard Waller Award commemorates Willard Waller, whose seminal work on teaching and schools laid the foundation for the sociology of education. The nature of the award rotates on a three-year cycle. The 2005 Willard Waller Award will go to an outstanding article in the field published in the last three years (2002-2004). Please send nominations to the chair of the award committee, Barbara Heyns, whose address is below. Please send nominations by **February 2, 2005** to:

Professor Barbara Heyns  
Department of Sociology  
New York University  
269 Mercer St., Fourth floor  
New York, NY 10003-6687.  
barbara.heyns@nyu.edu

## **MINUTES OF THE SOE SECTION BUSINESS MEETING**

August 17, 2004

Kevin Dougherty, section chair, presided at the business meeting. About 75 section members were in attendance. The meeting began at 1:00 p. m., preceding the NCLB mini-conference.

(1) Kevin expressed his gratitude to all those with whom he worked during his term as section chair. He appreciated the responsiveness of all those whom he contacted requesting help with various functions and activities. He added his congratulations to those who received awards, including Jeanne Ballantine, Maureen Hallinan, and graduate students: Jennifer Booher-Jennings, Jennifer C. Lee, and Jeremy Staff . He introduced and welcomed the new section officers and council members, including Jim Rosenbaum, incoming chair, and George Farkas, incoming secretary-treasurer; and Doug Downey and Ricardo Stanton Salazar, the new members of Council.

Kevin also thanked other section members who served in various capacities during the past year:

*Secretary-Treasurer:* Helen Marks; *Council:* Richard Arum, Karen Bradley, Claudia Buchmann, David Kinney, Katy Schiller, and Rob Warren; *Nominations Committee:* Chandra Muller (chair); Prudence

Carter; Francisco Ramirez; Sean Riordon; Ricardo Stanton-Salazar; *Willard Waller Award for a Career of Distinguished Scholarship*: Jeanne Ballantine (chair); Floyd Hammack; Aaron Pallas; William Trent; Pamela Walters.

*David Stevenson Graduate Student Paper Award*: Brian Powell (chair); Greg Anderson; Grace Kao; John Meyer; Carolyn Tyson; *Committee to Increase Recruitment and Retention of Sociologists of Color*: William Velez (chair), Ricardo Stanton-Salazar, Jomills Braddock, and Chandra Muller; *No Child Left Behind Conference*: Alan Sadovnik (co-chair), Kathy Borman (co-chair), Kevin Dougherty, James Rosenbaum, Gary Dworkin, Adam Gamoran, David Karen, Roslyn Mickelson, Michael Ross, Laura Salganik, Barbara Schneider, and Janelle Scott.

*Program Committee*: David Karen and Katherine McClelland (working with Roz Mickelson, the organizer of the regular Education sessions for ASA); *Membership Recruitment*: Gary Dworkin; *Newsletter Editor*: Tom Hoffer; *Webmaster*: Carl Schmitt; *San Francisco Local Arrangements*: Dan McFarland and Rebecca Sandefur.

*Section Reception*: The Section wishes to thank the American Institutes of Research -- particularly Laura Salganik and George Bohrnstedt -- for sponsoring the Section reception and the miniconference on No Child Left Behind.

(2) William Velez reported on his survey of sociologists of color undertaken to ascertain why so few are active in the Sociology of Education section. While minority membership makes up 20 percent of ASA, 10 percent of the section is minority. William distributed the survey through various listservs (SOE, Racial and Ethnic Minorities, and Race, Gender, and Class) and received 32 responses, 22 from section members. The distribution of responses was approximately 60 percent Latino, 20 percent Asian, and 20 percent African American.

The four main reasons the respondents gave for the lack of participation are: (1) the lack of sociologists of color in the discipline; (2) the absence of race as a central theme in the section; (3) other sections have greater relevance; and (4) the section is conservative. Overall, there is a perception that the section is not welcoming of scholars of color.

William recommended that the section be more aggressive in recruiting of sociologists of color; offer more sessions focused on issues of race and ethnicity; provide more effective mentoring; sponsor another professional development seminar; and partner with other sections where scholars of color are more visible.

An open discussion followed in which members asked questions and/or offered suggestions:

- Have other sections had this problem, and, if so, what did they do about it? The cost of additional section memberships could be a factor. (Tom Hoffer)
- Is there a follow-up plan?
- Nominations for section officers and council members need to come from a diverse pool. (William Velez)
- Sharing the sponsorship of sessions with other sections with greater minority memberships might make the Sociology of Education Section more visible. Special sessions are more readily available than thematic or plenary sessions. (Maureen Hallinan)

- What are the minority membership goals? It is important to be specific. How many individuals will be recruited and by what means? (Joyce Epstein)
  - Are reciprocal memberships a possibility? (Patrick McGinty)
  - The Racial and Ethnic Minorities Section is anxious to pair with the SOE Section. (Melanie Bush). Kevin Dougherty added that the incoming chairs of the Sections on Racial and Ethnic Minorities and Race, Gender, and Class have expressed considerable interest in working with the Sociology of Education Section on issues of common interest, including joint plenary, thematic, and special sessions.
  - Perhaps the NCLB follow-up conference in Philadelphia could feature a minority scholars panel on issues of race and ethnicity in the schools. (Alan Sadovnik)
  - The section itself must at minimum sponsor a session on race. (David Kinney)
- (3) Helen Marks gave the secretary-treasurer report. The section began the fiscal year with net assets of \$11,600 after miscellaneous expenses for plaques and other incidentals. Based on membership and dues, ASA allocated the section \$2,967. The section also received a back payment of \$2,000 from the American Institutes for Research for their sponsorship of the 2001 section reception. The current balance is \$16,567.

(4) Katherine McClelland reported on the program planning process that she co-chaired with David Karen. They collaborated very closely with Roz Mickelson who served as the ASA program organizer for education. Based on the many fine proposals that were submitted this year, Roz requested extra sessions from ASA and was given 11, giving the committee an ample amount with which to work.

In reviewing proposals, the committee gave preference to complete papers, original analyses, centrality of topic to SOE, interest to SOE members, and interesting, new findings.

Katherine and David recommend: continuing to work closely with the ASA program chair for education; resolving software problems, such as the ability to download e-mails; figuring out a better way to deal with proposals where the 2<sup>nd</sup> priority was outside of SOE (these can easily get lost); taking advantage of opportunities to collaborate; and trying to be inclusive in the roundtables.

(5) Gary Dworkin reported on membership. Since the membership initiative began in the early 1990s, the section membership has grown from 338 members. The initial goal set for membership at that time was 600. The section membership reached 672 as of July, 2004 and will probably reach 700 by the end of September. The Section includes 225 student members. Gary emphasized the importance of efforts to sustain the level of student memberships. During the coming year, Gary plans to work toward raising the membership to 800.

(6) Carl Schmitt reported on the website and related matters. The newsletter is now housed and archived on the SOE home page as part of ASAnet.org. Carl suggests that the website might be enhanced through such means as: a discussion bulletin board, links to SOE journal articles, a scholars' corner, think-pieces and working papers. He invited feedback on these ideas. Future funding is now an issue in that whether NCES will continue its sponsorship of web services is questionable. He estimated the cost of supporting the website at \$10,000 per year.

(7) Tom Hoffer reported on the newsletter. Currently, Tom issues the newsletter in December and July. If the volume of news and submissions warranted it, another issue would be possible. Tom raised the

issue of whether the section should publish a hard copy of the newsletter. Although no vote was taken, a visible consensus suggested that the electronic edition would generally be sufficient.

(8) Suet-Ling Pong reported on Sociology of Education. The journal considered 168 submissions last year – 91 new, 49 revisions, and 28 still in review. Accepted manuscripts numbered 29; rejected, 38; not appropriate, 16; and revise and resubmit, 55. The acceptance rate is 11.9 percent. The average decision time is 12 weeks.

(9) Alan Sadovnik reported that 94 people had registered for the NCLB mini-conference. He and co-chair Kathy Borman, and their committee (including Kevin Dougherty, Gary Dworkin, Adam Gamoran, David Karen, Roz Mickelson, Jim Rosenbaum, Michael Ross, Laura Salganik, Barbara Schneider, and Janelle Scott) worked hard on the preparations during the course of the year. He acknowledged the generous support of the American Institutes for Research, which contributed \$20,000 toward the conference. He recognized the assistance of Laura Salganik and George Bohrnstedt of AIR in helping to bring that about. Follow-up plans under consideration include a conference before the ASA 2005 meeting in Philadelphia, a special issue of Sociology of Education, and an edited volume.

(10) Kevin moved that the section budget \$1500 for the coming year to support the NCLB follow-up efforts. George Farkas seconded the motion. The membership approved the recommendation unanimously.

(11) Kevin opened the floor to new business.

- Jeanne Ballantine announced the publication of a new edition (6<sup>th</sup> edition) of Teaching Sociology of Education.

- David Baker proposed that the section consider a new award for applied (or public) sociology of education. Currently, the sections are limited to three awards, but a request for a change could be considered by the SOE council and ultimately brought to the committee on sections. It was noted, however, that the Section only sponsors two awards at this time (the Willard Waller award and the David Stevenson award) so there is room to add another award. Kevin Dougherty supported David Baker's proposal and suggested that the incoming chair, Jim Rosenbaum, might want to appoint a committee to look into the feasibility and design of the award proposed by David Baker.

- Joyce Epstein suggested that a letter or proclamation of appreciation be sent to the American Institutes for Research expressing the section's gratitude for its support of the reception and the NCLB mini-conference. This suggestion was warmly received.

(12) Kevin thanked everyone for their support and "passed the gavel" to Jim Rosenbaum, who will chair the section for the coming year. Jim took the podium, but, in view of the hour with the mini-conference about to start, said he would forego remarks and moved to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen M. Marks, Secretary-Treasurer

#### **THE WILLARD WALLER AWARD FOR 2003-2004**

The Willard Waller Award commemorates Willard Waller, whose seminal work on teaching and schools laid the foundation for the sociology of education. The nature of the award rotates on a three-year cycle.

The 2004 Willard Waller award is for a career of distinguished scholarship. The distinguished career award is given to an individual whose scholarly contributions over the years have advanced the study of education within the field of sociology.

In many ways our awardee represents the reason for having the Willard Haller Award for outstanding achievement in one's career. Past president of the American Sociological Association (ASA), chair of the Sociology of Education section, editor of *Sociology of Education*—there are few significant positions in ASA and the Section that she has not held. With over 100 publications and seven edited books, she is a prolific scholar who can be compared to few in terms of contribution to the field of sociology of education and sociology in general.

Currently the William P. and Hazel B. White Professor of Sociology at the University of Notre Dame and the Director of the Center for Research on Educational Opportunity, Maureen Hallinan is also the principal investigator of a two and a half million dollar U.S. Department of Education grant to examine instructional practices in public and private elementary and secondary schools. Looking over her career, one is immediately struck by the important problems she has pursued and the incredible scope of her intellectual interests including social networks—the topic of her dissertation; school organization—primarily in the areas of tracking and scheduling; norms and friendships; race and educational access and opportunity; and public and private school effects. Bridging the conceptual with its methodological applications, she has also written several principal pieces on modeling and measuring social networks and the measurement of track affects on achievement.

A gifted teacher and mentor, she has placed her students in universities and colleges throughout the U.S. As the director of her Center, she has provided support for multiple postdoctoral students and created several new positions in sociology of education at Notre Dame. An institutional builder, she has helped to establish sociology of education as a prominent specialization in the sociology department and attracted some of the finest young scholars working in this area today.

She is widely recognized as a leading sociologist and has taken a leadership role in education. Elected to the National Academy of Education and Vice President for Fellows, she has been involved in the selection of Spencer pre-doctoral grantees and the National Academy of Education postdoctoral fellows.

The recipient of multiple scholarly awards and research grants, Dr. Hallinan has been a role model for the members of the section. In all aspects of her work, whether in research, teaching, or service, she has achieved prominence and international acclaim. These awards have been made in recognition of her present work, but also on the accumulation of knowledge she has made to the discipline and the field of sociology of education.

The extent of Hallinan's work is quite remarkable. Recent work on race and social norms reflect her interest in delving underneath the formal social structure of schools and classrooms into the mechanisms of stratification and how they operate through teachers, parents, and neighborhoods. Obtaining her own data set and linking it to the comprehensive neighborhood study of Sampson and Raudenbush, this study of public and private schools and their neighborhood contexts may be her most important work to date.

The Willard Waller award was not intended to commemorate the end of a scholar's career but rather to honor someone who had made and was continuing to make outstanding contributions to research. Fortunately the sociology of education section of ASA has a number of very distinguished scholars. Many fine SOE scholars were nominated. In the end Maureen's contributions stood out as outstanding and continuing to make significant contributions to the discipline and our field.

On behalf of the Awards Committee—Floyd Hammack, Aaron Pallas, William Trent and Pamela Walters—and the ASA Section on SOE, I am delighted to present this plaque to Maureen Hallinan.

Jeanne Ballantine, Chair, SOE Section Awards Committee

### **DAVID LEE STEVENSON GRADUATE STUDENT PAPER AWARD FOR 2004**

Brian Powell, Chair

The David Lee Stevenson Graduate Student Paper Award Committee (Greg Anderson, Simon Cheng, Grace Kao, John Meyer, Karolyn Tyson, and Brian Powell, chair) faced the time consuming but pleasurable task of evaluating an unprecedented twenty-one paper submissions this year. Choosing the recipients of the award was especially difficult since so many papers were of very high quality, an indication of the great vitality and diversity of research being done by young scholars in Sociology of Education.

After much deliberation, the Committee concluded that two papers were so exceptional that they both warranted recognition. The Committee, therefore, is delighted to announce this year's recipients of the Stevenson Award: **Jennifer Booher-Jennings** (an advanced graduate student at Columbia) for "Below the Bubble: 'Educational Triage' and the Texas Accountability System" and **Jennifer C. Lee** (an advanced graduate student at University of Minnesota) and **Jeremy Staff** (a recent PhD from University of Minnesota who currently is an assistant professor at Pennsylvania State University) for "When Work Matters: The Varying Impact of Adolescent Work Intensity on High School Dropout."

"Below the Bubble: 'Educational Triage' and the Texas Accountability System" is a beautifully executed qualitative study focusing on a single school in Texas that speaks to explicit educational policy issues, in particular, No Child Left Behind. This is precisely the type of provocative and timely sociological scholarship that should be shared with policy makers. Equally effective and thoughtful is "When Work Matters: The Varying Impact of Adolescent Work Intensity on High School Dropout," a highly sophisticated quantitative analysis of NELS that, in the words of one committee member, "could be easily published as is."

Despite the ostensible differences between the two papers (one is qualitative while one is quantitative, one is more macro while one is more micro), the authors share in common a deep-rooted understanding of and ability to integrate the relevant literatures in their areas of interest, an ability to ask research questions that are simultaneous very specific to the topic but also broadly theoretical and policy relevant, and impeccable methodological skills. These scholars have made important contributions to Sociology of Education by authoring two terrific papers that the Committee believes will be highly influential.

### **SUMMARY OF THE SOE SECTION POLICY CONFERENCE ON NCLB**

**August 17, 2004 2:30-6:30 p.m., San Francisco**

Kevin Dougherty, James Rosenbaum, Alan Sadovnik, and Kathy Borman

The *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) is a landmark and controversial piece of legislation that may have far-reaching consequences for education in the United States. Already there is talk of spreading similar accountability efforts to higher education in the next re-authorization of the Higher Education Act. And of course state governments have been busily pursuing accountability requirements for K-12 and higher education for years now. NCLB is the centerpiece of President George W. Bush's educational policy. A logical progression of the standards movement initiated in 1983 by *A Nation at Risk* and in federal

legislation under Presidents G. H. W. Bush (*America 2000*) and W.J Clinton (*Goals 2000*), NCLB is the most comprehensive federal legislation governing state and local educational policies in U.S. history.

Given the importance of NCLB, it is imperative that policy makers, educators, and parents have objective, data-driven analyses to guide their decisionmaking. Unfortunately, the discussion of NCLB has too often been rhetorical, lacking in data about the law and its effect. Moreover, that discussion has been dominated by educational psychology and economics, to the detriment of the issues and findings that sociology would illuminate. In order to better understand the history and effects of NCLB, the Sociology of Education Section held a conference on NCLB on the last day of the 2004 Annual Meetings.

Unlike the UK and other nations with centralized national control of educational policy, the U.S. has no history of federal control. The U.S. constitution does not explicitly mention education as a federal role, and therefore, under its tenth Amendment control of education is delegated to the states. But especially since World War II, federal involvement in education has greatly grown, under the banner of landmark legislation such as the GI Bill in 1945, the Elementary and Secondary Education and Higher Education Acts of 1965, the Education for Children with Disabilities Act of 1975, and the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1996, and landmark Supreme Court decisions such as *Brown v. Board* in 1954 and *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg* in 1971. However, the federal government did not begin to set educational standards until the 1990s, specifically with *America 2000* and *Goals 2000*.

The No Child Left Behind Act, which was passed as part of the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act, for the first time set specific national standards for schools and their students and penalties for not meeting these standards. Although states are still able to set their own curriculum and assessment standards, states that do not comply with the federal standards are ineligible for millions of dollars in federal Title I monies for disadvantaged students, as well as other federal educational aid.

NCLB requires all states to have yearly assessments for all students in the K-12 grades. Schools are required to have yearly report cards on the percentage of students who are proficient in core subjects such as mathematics and reading, with these data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, and disability. Schools must demonstrate annual yearly progress for the entire school as well as for each of the disaggregated subgroups. If a school does not demonstrate annual yearly progress for three years it is labeled low performing. It is then subject to restructuring, reconstitution, and replacement of teachers and administrators, and its students are eligible to transfer to a public school of their choice in either their own district or a neighboring district (if that district agrees to take them). In addition to the assessment standards and choice provisions, NCLB requires that all schools have 100% of their teachers certified as highly qualified, as defined by state standards, and that states use scientifically proven methods of instruction (at this point, the only approved reading programs are ones that involve phonics).

Advocates of the legislation, such as the Education Trust, argue that NCLB's annual testing and disaggregation requirements will force states to reduce the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students. Schools will not be able to hide low achievement by disadvantaged students behind higher achievement by advantaged children. However, critics from both the academic and political worlds argue that the bill does not provide sufficient funds to improve failing schools and, more importantly, is heavy on punishment and light on means to build school capacity. Assessment experts argue that, since the types of tests and definitions of adequate yearly progress vary by state, there is no uniform definition of proficiency. In addition, since the assessments are based on a zero-sum definition of proficiency rather than a value-added one, schools whose students show significant progress but are still below proficiency are labeled as failures rather than rewarded for their progress. Moreover, schools with high turnover rates are punished for this, despite the fact that this high turnover is largely outside of the schools' control. Finally, more radical critics argue that NCLB fails to acknowledge the social and economic sources of unequal educational achievement

and is a backdoor to publicly funded school vouchers and the dismantling of public education in the U.S.

The purpose of the conference at this year's ASA meeting was to apply sociological analysis to NCLB. NCLB embodies several features that most sociologists see as desirable: a focus on student outcomes and attention to subgroups of students, particularly disadvantaged ones. And as a discipline, sociology has much to say about key concerns of No Child Left Behind: assessment, instructional improvement, teacher recruitment and professional development, and school choice. However, much of the public debate about NCLB has been political and ideological. And when academic research has been brought to bear, it has been dominated by educational psychology and economics, with insufficient regard to the issues of stratification processes, institutional structures, and organizational dynamics that our discipline would spotlight. Sociological analyses can strongly illuminate how school structures and processes respond to the NCLB mandates and whether and why those responses result in the intended achievement gains. Further, sociologists can shed light on how the success or failure of No Child Left Behind is affecting status attainment processes for students differing in social class, race-ethnicity, and gender.

The conference was put together by a planning committee appointed by Kevin Dougherty, outgoing chair of the Sociology of Education Section (2003-04). The committee was chaired by Alan Sadovnik and Kathy Borman and included Kevin Dougherty, James Rosenbaum (incoming chair of the Sociology of Education Section, 2004-05), Gary Dworkin, Adam Gamoran, David Karen, Roslyn Mickelson, Michael Ross, Laura Salganik, Barbara Schneider, and Janelle Scott.

The conference ran between 2:30 and 6:30 on Tuesday, Aug. 17. It attracted over 90 participants. The conference was supported by a grant from the American Institutes for Research, which has long been a strong supporter of sociology of education and of the Sociology of Education Section.

After some opening remarks, the conference participants heard from a panel of experts on NCLB. Christopher Cross, former Assistant Secretary for Education and Senior Fellow at the Center for Educational Policy, spoke on the history of federal involvement in education, from the very beginning to No Child Left Behind. Russlynn Ali of the Education Trust, a major advocate of No Child Left Behind, followed with remarks on the achievement gap faced by American students and how NCLB would address that gap. The panel concluded with Robert Copeland, Superintendent of the Piscataway, New Jersey Schools, analyzing his experiences as a district administrator with NCLB and describing its strengths as well as its likely problems.

The bulk of the conference was devoted to nine roundtable discussions, organized around different facets of No Child Left Behind: accountability, curriculum and instruction, developing high quality teachers, parental involvement, and school choice. The discussions focused on identifying the key research and policy issues raised by NCLB and determining the state of sociological knowledge on those issues. Each of the discussions was led by a moderator and a rapporteur, sociologists expert in the particular issues being raised by NCLB. Barbara Schneider, John Robert Warren, Chandra Muller, Rachel Pereira, Gary Dworkin, and Susan Semel led the discussions of accountability. The discussions on curriculum and improvement were moderated by Maureen Hallinan, Sean Kelly, Adam Gamoran, and Kathryn Schiller. Meanwhile, Joan Talbert, Thomas Smith, Richard Ingersoll, and Kimberly Scott were in charge of the discussions on teacher improvement. Finally, the discussions of school choice and parental involvement were led by Joyce Epstein, Jamie Lew, Janelle Scott, and Jeannie Powers.

The discussions at the conference will bear fruit in several different ways. Besides being presented at the conference, summaries of the roundtable discussions will be posted on the Sociology of Education Section webpage. These reports will also provide the basis for submissions to the new "Perspective" section of the journal *Sociology of Education*. Finally, Jim Rosenbaum, the incoming Section chair, is planning a full day conference for the day before the 2005 ASA Meetings. This conference would be devoted to research papers

on NCLB, which will be later collected in a book.

Ultimately, this effort is aimed at creating a strong conceptual and evidentiary base for sociologists to vigorously contribute to the policy discussions that will frame the re-authorization of No Child Left Behind Act in 2007. The hope is that this enhanced sociological contribution will produce policy discussions that are better grounded in sociological theory and research and thus better able to reduce the class and race-ethnic gaps in educational achievement. The design and implementation of educational policies is very complex, often leading to ineffective procedures or unintended consequences. Sociological theory and research can help to anticipate which procedures will be more effective and which ones will lead to unintended consequences.

## **FINAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE TO INCREASE THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF SCHOLARS OF COLOR IN THE SOE SECTION**

**William Velez**  
**University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee**  
**September 8, 2004**

This report is the culmination of a process started by the 2003-04 chair of the Sociology of Education section, Kevin Dougherty, who was concerned that so few African American, Latino, and Asian American sociologists were members of the Sociology of Education section. It was also apparent that SOE was not representative of the larger ASA membership. While almost one in five members (18%) of the American Sociological Association were of minority background in 2003, the comparable figure for the Sociology of Education was definitely smaller at ten percent (57 out of 600). To address these concerns Kevin Dougherty appointed a special committee composed of Jomills Braddock, Chandra Muller, Ricardo Stanton-Salazar, and as chair, William Velez. This group was named the “Committee to Increase the Recruitment and Retention of Scholars of Color in the Sociology of Education Section.”

The Committee crafted a survey for direct feedback from sociologists of color on this issue. It was sent to members of the Sections for Sociology of Education, Racial and Ethnic Minorities, and Race, Gender, and Class. A very compelling note from Kevin Dougherty explained why he considered this study so important to the life of the SOE. To quote: “The Section would be more vibrant and effective in both research and policy if more minority scholars were members of the Section, participating on its program, and serving as its officers. There is also an equity dimension: has the Sociology of Education Section failed to welcome minority scholars so they instead choose to go elsewhere? What can the Section do to better recruit and retain minority scholars?”

### ***Sample Profile***

There were 32 respondents to the survey. Of these, 27% were male while female respondents comprised 73% of the sample. The ethnic profile of respondents is as follows:

- Latina/o: 59%
- Asian: 22%
- African American: 13%
- American Indian: 3%
- White: 3%

The average age of the respondents was 37 years old. Most of the respondents belonged to the section. Approximately seven out of every ten respondents were SOE section members (69%), while section non-members represented 31% of the sample.

## ***Results***

### **Reasons for not Joining the Section**

Section non-members were asked “what are the main reasons behind your decision to not join the Sociology of Education section?” The reason cited most frequently was cost (4 out of 10). In other words, financial considerations (dues) prevented some from joining yet another ASA section. The second most frequent response was “other sections more important for me” (3 out of 10). One respondent wrote: “My main research interest is not directly related to education.”

### **Reasons for Section’s Failure to Attract More Sociologists of Color**

Our survey instrument asked respondents to list what they believed were the main reasons behind the failure of the SOE section to attract more minority scholars into its membership. The most frequently cited reasons were as follows:

- Lack of minority sociologists of color in the discipline: 35%*
- Race is not a central theme in Sociology of Education: 24%*
- Other ASA sections more important for minority sociologists: 19%*
- Sociology of Education is a conservative sub-discipline: 16%*

It appears that the relative scarcity of sociologists of color identified with Sociology of Education turns off both active and potential section members. To illustrate this, one respondent wrote: “the lack of diversity in the section has probably led many sociologists of color to invest their time and resources in other sections in ASA where our concerns and intellectual inclinations get more validation.” Another wrote: “at least for me, there were (1980’s and 1990’s) very few major figures in our field who either were non-white, minority, or who made race and ethnicity central to their analyses.”

The survey results indicate the presence of a widespread perception that race and ethnicity are not central or important concerns within Sociology of Education. Typical of this perception are the following statements: “class stratification has dominated the intellectual stage in the Sociology of Education, while a combined race, class, and gender analysis-as the intellectual standard-has been pushed into the future.” Another respondent stated: “the section is not known as having a particular focus on Latinos.”

Both members and non-members of the section often expressed the belief that other ASA sections were more responsive or central to their sociological work. For example, a section member who also belongs to four other sections stated: “the issues of concern for the section do not reflect the needs and issues for the minority population.” Yet another section member wrote: “although I pay my dues, I’m not always attracted to section meetings and receptions. Due to the existence of other sections that address race and ethnicity, it’s often easy to skip SOE section meetings.”

### **What Can the Section Do to Attract More Minority Scholars?**

The last question on our questionnaire prompted respondents to offer suggestions as to strategies for the section to increase the representation of minority scholars in its membership. The most frequently offered suggestions are classified as follows:

*Mount direct recruiting program of scholars of color: 56%*  
*Have more panels/sessions on race and ethnicity: 25%*  
*Offer mentoring to students and young faculty: 19%*

There were many suggestions to mount aggressive recruitment campaigns for minority scholars. For example, one respondent suggested that “through email (perhaps a listserve), we can develop a strategy to recruit and promote the participation of those in the larger body of scholars of color that identify race, ethnicity, and schooling as one of their areas of study. Most of this recruitment would occur through personal networks.” Another member suggested that the section needs to “advertise more, like have posters or a newsletter sent through schools of education and sociology departments across the country.”

Another frequent suggestion was for the SOE section to offer more panel and regular paper sessions on issues of race and ethnicity. One respondent wrote: “the SOE should submit a special call for papers on the topic of minorities and education to other section listserves.” Another suggested the section “should have joint sessions with sections such as Race and Ethnicity and Latina/o Sociology and make this a regular thing, not a one-shot thing.”

### ***Conclusions and Recommendations***

The results of this study suggest there is a widespread perception amongst minority sociologists that SOE is not a welcoming environment for the kinds of concerns and/or research issues of importance to minority sociologists of education. The section was described by many respondents as lacking diversity in its membership and as not overtly concerned with issues of race and ethnicity.

Some recommendations that may lead to more minority representation within SOE are as follows:

1. Mount an aggressive campaign to attract minority sociologists to the section by reaching out to young faculty and graduate students. This can be done, for example, through professional development workshops at the meetings;
2. Highlight the latest research in sociology of education dealing with race and ethnicity. This can be accomplished through the regular paper sessions or by special topic sessions at the annual meetings;
3. Establish partnerships with other ASA sections interested in the intersection between education, gender, and race/ethnicity that can lead to more paper sessions on a regular basis; and
4. Become more receptive to new ways of looking at race and ethnicity within the sociology of education. This can be done through invited essays in the newsletter or through a special issue of the journal *Sociology of Education*.

We believe SOE can succeed in attracting more sociologists of education to its membership ranks. This is very important for the health and vitality of our section and for Sociology in general. Commenting on the small number of minorities in Sociology and other behavioral sciences, an ASA Research Brief stated “to overcome ‘token’ status and to expand the core field of these paradigms of these disciplines, their representation needs to increase to keep pace with demographic changes in the United States” (“Minorities at Three Stages in the Sociology Pipeline” 2001, pp. 8). With continued vigilance and attention to diversifying our discipline, the SOE section can do its part in this worthwhile endeavor.

### **LETTER TO THE EDITOR: SOE SECTION DINNERS**

**Sam Lucas** writes:

I greatly enjoyed much of the Sociology of Education festivities at ASA this year. I enjoyed the

reception, the conversation in the halls, and the dinner as well. But I did not enjoy *eating* the dinner, for there was precious little there for me to eat.

Every year I wonder whether I will be forced to starve at the annual SOE dinner. Some years I am pleasantly surprised—good food is available for vegetarians, food that does not have “sea” in front of it no less. Other years, I am sadly denied—as in this year, where vegetarians had to eat at a Chinese restaurant and have nothing but string beans and asparagus. I left hungry, arrived too late at my hotel to order anything, and thus I went to bed hungry. The memory of good conversation failed to fill my belly.

Well, I want to be constructive here—I’ve eaten something since the SOE dinner, so I am no longer in the throes of hunger pangs. So, let’s list a few reasons why vegetarian options should be routine at our SOE dinner.

- 1) Vegetarian entrees are cheaper so vegetarians end up subsidizing omnivores (given our one cost fits all tradition).
- 2) Younger scholars may be more likely to be vegetarian (more research needed) and thus having vegetarian options will be another way to extend a welcoming hand to younger members of the field.
- 3) When vegetarian options are provided, non-vegetarians often order the vegetarian option (I noticed this when I hosted the dinner in SF some years ago). Thus, providing this option pleases more than just vegetarians. (This may happen because at conferences people eat so many meals on the fly that lack vegetables, the dinner provides a place where they know they can get some vegetable sustenance—if an option is provided).
- 4) Some persons may follow a vegetarian diet for religious reasons, so providing a vegetarian option respects the religions of some (it is my understanding one can more easily be kosher with a vegetarian option, and some religions have strong views on not killing animals).
- 5) Vegetarians can’t eat the other options. Why invite people to a dinner, but serve them food they cannot eat, or only insubstantial amounts (e.g., appetizers) of food they can eat? Hosting requires more.

I could go on, but I will stop here.

We are well past the time where the SOE dinner should routinely provide a vegetarian option—and, just to be clear, fish is *not* a vegetarian option. :-) Just three entrees would be needed to meet this aim—a beef dish, a non-beef animal dish (salmon or chicken is common), and a vegetarian dish (with or without tofu, with or without pasta). A fourth dish is not beyond the possible, given the large size of our group and thus the money restaurants can make off of us.

Finally, by a vegetarian dish I do not mean a few side dishes. I mean a main course. If pressed, I can give entree examples from the 2004 SOE dinner restaurant.

But this isn’t about one dinner on one night, it is about routinizing our inclusiveness for the future. To that end, I will be happy to consult with whomever has (bravely) volunteered to arrange the dinner for Philadelphia. We are all committed to inclusiveness. And, well-meaning efforts to be inclusive, such as providing a few veggies for the vegetarians, while appreciated, still leave at least some of us hungry, and one of us . . . a bit angry. Just a bit.

The dinner should routinely be inclusive of this dietary group, and I am willing to assist in making that

happen. But I also wanted to raise this publicly, because it is important to convey to future organizers and would-be organizers that providing a vegetarian entree option must be as routine as providing a non-beef option for those with dietary needs or even preferences. Given our inclusive history, I doubt this will be a problem once it is publicly raised. I look forward to dining in the City of Brotherly Love, in 2005, with my SOE friends.

Sincerely,  
Sam

### MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

**Amy Binder**, Department of Sociology at the University of California, San Diego, has received three awards for her book *Contentious Curricula: Afrocentrism and Creationism in American Public Schools* (Princeton University Press, 2002). In April 2004 she was awarded the AERA's Outstanding Book Award, an honor previously bestowed upon Stephen Jay Gould, Jonathan Kozol, and Carol Gilligan, among others. In August 2003 she received the Best Book Award from the Culture Section of the ASA, and in April 2003 she was awarded the Pacific Sociological Association's Distinguished Scholarship Award.

### SOE SECTION MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Dear Colleague:

It is time for most of us to renew our membership in the American Sociological Association for 2005. Whether you plan to renew your ASA membership by e-mail or by snail mail, the Membership Committee of our Sociology of Education Section would like to remind you to renew your membership in our section, too. Over the past ten years our section has grown from slightly over 300 members to almost 800. The result of this growth has enabled us to hold more sessions at the American Sociological Association annual meetings and to sponsor more activities for members. For many years our goal had been to reach the 600-member level in order to be permitted by ASA to add more sessions at the meetings. We have met and surpassed that goal and are now focusing on the 800 member level for the 2005 meetings. However, membership totals tend to be fluid and if we fall below our current level, we can lose some of the sessions we have worked to gain. In an effort to preserve sessions and even to expand benefits the committee and I ask to consider something in addition.

Besides renewing your own membership, we would offer two modest suggestions. First, ask one of your colleagues to become a member of the section. The section dues are low and we offer numerous benefits to section members. Second, there may be a graduate student with whom you work, who is a member of the ASA, but not a member of the Sociology of Education Section. Please consider buying one or more of your students a membership, which costs \$7 at the student rate or \$12 at the regular membership rate, as a "thank you" for their help on a particular project or their work as your teaching or research assistant. It is an inexpensive reward, but it will help them with their professional socialization and benefit your section, too.

The Sociology of Education Section has a website that can be accessed by clicking on to [www.asanet.org/soe](http://www.asanet.org/soe). Please click on this web address and familiarize yourself with the numerous benefits and sources of information, employment, and data provided by the section. Then please print a copy of the section membership form displayed below for that student you wish to thank. In addition, please print off other copies and talk to your colleagues or graduate students. We hope that you will encourage at least one person to join the section.

When you speak to your colleagues and students, you might want to point out that the section has many benefits to offer, including access to an on-line website that contains an extensive bibliography on educational issues created by Robert Dreeban of the University of Chicago; a jobs and fellowships board and access to data and information for research

projects and research funding. Last August, in San Francisco, we had a very successful post-meeting mini-conference on the “No Child Left Behind Act,” and intend to extend the discussion during the 2005 meetings. The section sponsors a successful and delightful annual dinner at the ASA meetings and an auction that generates funds for graduate students. We make awards to students and honor the accomplishments of educational researchers; we hold conferences that address salient issues in educational research and education policy; and we sponsor large and successful roundtables at the ASA meetings where, frequently, senior scholars have served as critics, offering positive suggestions to improve student and faculty research.

Thank you for helping our section and one another. If merely one-quarter of us are successful in recruiting one new member each, we shall not only assure ourselves of continued access to all of the sessions we currently enjoy at ASA meetings, we shall gain additional sessions, thereby enabling more people to share their research.

Sincerely,

A. Gary Dworkin  
SOE Membership Chair 2004-2005

## How to Join the Sociology of Education Section:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ I am currently a member of the ASA and want to join the Sociology of Education Section. Enclosed is my check, payable to the American Sociological Association.

\_\_\_ \$12.00 Member

\_\_\_ \$7.00 Student Member

(For student members the signature of a faculty sponsor is required.)

\_\_\_ \$10.00 Low-Income

\_\_\_ I am not a member of the ASA, but am interested in joining the Sociology of Education Section. I understand that I must also join the ASA. Please send me information about members in the ASA.

Copy and Mail to:

**American Sociological Association  
1307 New York Ave., NW  
Suite 700  
Washington, D.C. 20005**

**Phone: 202-383-9005  
FAX: 202-638-0882  
e-mail: executive.office@asanet.org**

**FUTURE NEWSLETTER ITEMS**

Please e-mail any section-related news and announcements to  
Tom Hoffer  
Hoffer-Tom@norc.uchicago.edu