

The Education Department Spends Millions on Research--Teachers Want It but does it get to the Classroom? Do they trust it? Why Not?

Dr. Santiago Wood, NABE's Executive Director, along with his Coalition partner Dr. Nancy Lewin, Executive Director for ALAS, along with members of the American Federation of Teachers, Military Schools, and more than 50 other professional organizations met on Monday at the Gallup Building in downtown DC with Bart Epstein, chief executive officer of the Jefferson Education Exchange, for an all day comprehensive working institute on the initial results of the Institute of Education Sciences' listening tour on teacher priorities on school research and its application to improving instruction and closing the achievement gap, particularly for ELs and the urgent need for new research in the areas of technology, educational equity, student trauma and more effective outreach in existing research. The lead story in Tuesday Morning education week by Sarah D. Sparks gives extensive coverage of this initial tour and points out that the

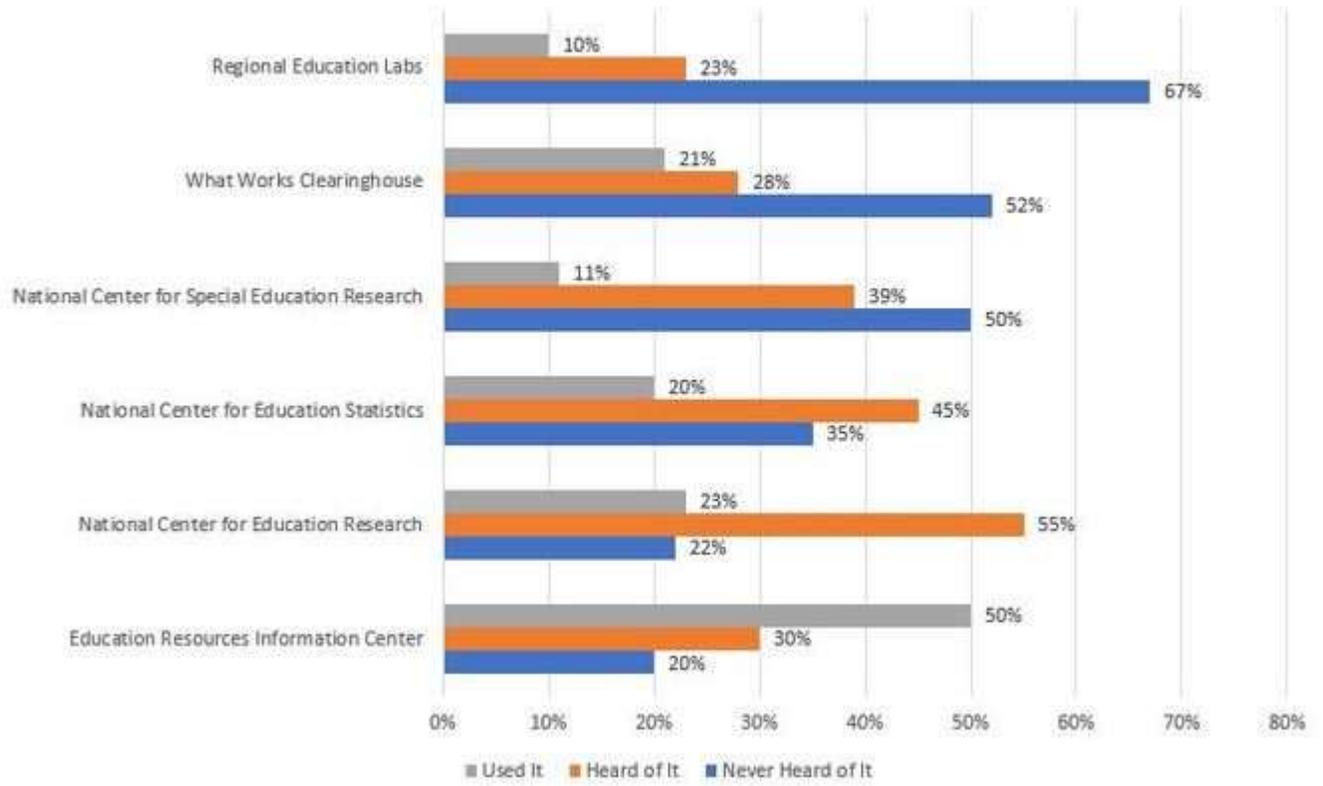
IES representatives were not allowed to talk. They were just there to listen. Sarah further pointed out that it was fascinating to hear the teachers and administrators say, 'Someone should research *this*,' and the IES people are biting their tongues saying, 'We spend \$50 million researching that! We have that answer!' today told "This is a big problem, but it's a good problem to have."

The meeting is part of an ongoing **effort** to understand what IES Director Mark Schneider calls the "**last mile problem**," moving from completing and publishing education studies to ensuring their practical implications are communicated to the teachers and administrators who can use them.

"It's not just a disconnect, it's a contradiction," said David Griffith, the senior director of advocacy and government relations for ASCD, a nonprofit focused on curriculum and professional development. "We say we want teachers to use research and evidence, but then we want you to think outside the box and try new things and be brave to fail—but you better be using stuff that has been proven to be effective." In addition to the listening tour, IES and the University of Virginia's Jefferson Education Exchange, a nonprofit that **collects teachers' perspectives on ed-tech implementation**, surveyed 510 K-12 educators about research use in their teaching practice, as well as special focus groups in Omaha, Neb., and Raleigh, N.C. The survey is still open to other educators who want to participate, but preliminary data show fewer than 1 in 4 teachers had used any of IES' research programs except **ERIC** ., which allows users to search for academic studies by keyword. More to the point, fewer than half of the teachers had even heard of the What Works Clearinghouse, or the regional education laboratories that specialize in practical research on local issues.

Note: for further information on this story and to view the research charts and teacher responses, etc., please refer to Tuesday, November 28, 2018, Education Week Story by Sarah D. Sparks. Check out some nice press coverage in [EdSurge](#), [EdWeek](#) and [TJHJE Journal](#). Consider sharing it through your social media accounts and with your members along with your own commentary.

Educators' Use of Federal Research Sources



"This is not a dislike of these sources," said Emily Barton, the exchange's director of implementation research. "This is just unawareness. ... They don't know this as a source they can trust." In fact, 87 percent of the teachers said they wanted to participate in a study, and 77 percent wanted to co-direct a study with an academic researcher. In one working session, representatives of the professional groups argued teachers need more Webinars, podcasts and similar conversations around research, rather than simply better access to research journals. IES, the Education Department's research agency, hopes to use the results of the survey and listening tour to shape its future research priorities and plans for disseminating research.

Chart Source: IES and Jefferson Education Exchange