



Job Title: *Post-Doctoral Research Fellow*

(Full-time and/or part-time positions considered; 8-12 months with possibility to extend)

Job Description: *Post-Doctoral Research Fellow*

ERS is seeking one or more full- or part-time post-doctoral fellows to conduct and publish academic research on resources in education, using data collected by ERS in its last several years of conducting action research with urban districts.

Qualifications: Ph.D. in a related discipline (economics, political science, public policy, or education or similar) by the time the post-doc starts is strongly preferred. ABD status might be considered.

- Experience in quantitative analysis, including knowledge of statistics as well as small-study research design
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Experience in education or education reform a plus but a passion for improving urban education systems is required

Salary: Competitive, up to \$60,000 for first year for qualified applicants, plus benefits. Post-docs are hired for up to one year with a possibility of a second year based upon satisfactory completion of initial research project and a successful second research proposal.

Detailed Job Description: *Post-Doctoral Research Fellow*

In the last several years, ERS has collected and analyzed data on a number of large urban districts, including:

- Course schedule information that links teachers to classes and sometimes to specific students
- Detailed line-item budgets, including payroll detail, usually at lowest level of detail
- Human resources data on experience, certification, and education
- Student demographic information
- Student and school performance information

For some districts, virtually all of this information is disaggregated to the level of specific students. Other information is disaggregated to the level of classes or schools. In all cases, we have applied similar methods and frameworks to recode the expenditures to facilitate cross-district comparison and to allocate the costs down to the lowest possible unit, whether students or schools, given the nature of data provided.

The research conducted would attempt to describe and analyze patterns with regard to:

- Whether school-level resources are aligned with student needs, including patterns of individual attention, teaching quality, and time, such as teacher load, class size, time in subject, distribution of teacher expertise, priority investments across time, subject, grade, or student groupings.
- Whether overall district resources are aligned with priorities and the extent to which they are “misaligned,” trapped by legacy institutions and structures, including issues related to compensation reform, professional development strategies, school turnaround strategies, or human capital and performance management.

The data set is not currently sufficient to allow causal research on whether specific alignment patterns have yielded improvement in student performance. Thus, the research project would focus on resource alignment and misalignment at the district and school level in an attempt to:

- Describe patterns
- Analyze trends
- Try to discern and communicate root causes of existing good and bad practices (and suggest practical solutions or ways to take to scale)
- And/or model novel solutions to poor or misaligned resource use that may not exist at present (such as new compensation structures, new methods for funding schools, etc)

The deliverables will include:

- A concrete research plan, subject to approval by ERS that includes planned journal submissions
- ERS White paper(s) describing initial findings
- Research paper(s) for submission to scholarly journal

The ideal ERS Post-Doc has strong and proven analytical and qualitative research skills. Some knowledge and experience with statistics is strongly preferred. ERS is a small organization with a strong professional learning community. As such, we place teamwork, initiative and a desire to learn and grow at a premium. While experience in the education sector is not required, a passion for improving the educational experience for all students is! Post-doc should be willing to live and work in the Boston area and will participate in ERS-wide meetings and activities as a full member of the ERS team. However, the post-docs sole assignment will be to complete the research project and related activities. The cleaning and processing of data should and must be done in a way that is accessible to all members of the ERS staff and ERS retains sole ownership of the data, except for the uses to which the post-doc agrees to use it as part of the research design.

The post-doctoral fellow will be responsible to analyze and reanalyze any and all data related to the project, including any recoding or reprocessing of data that may be needed. ERS will do its best to facilitate additional access to client data sources where needed and will provide equipment comparable to any ERS employee, including access to a laptop computer. The post-doc will report to the ERS Director of Research but must also nominate and recruit three outside board members from academic institutions who will review the research proposal and provide regular guidance and counsel on the quality of the proposed project in exchange for an honorarium. ERS must approve the three outside board members.

Application Process

Interested in this post-doctoral opportunity? Please submit your resume, cover letter and a very brief statement of research interests of no more than one page, as well as three references (including at least two academic references) to Julie Derderian: jderderian@educationresourcestrategies.org

Those who pass a pre-screening, will engage in a second round process where they will engage in discussions with ERS and jointly develop a more detailed research proposal for final consideration. At that point, applicants will receive more information and limited access to the various datasets.



About Education Resource Strategies (ERS)

Education Resource Strategies, Inc. is a non-profit organization that works with large urban public school systems to rethink the use of district and school-level resources, supporting strategies for improved instruction and performance. ERS is the only organization in the country with over 10 years of experience collaborating with the largest urban districts in the area of strategic resource allocation. We have worked with Los Angeles Unified, Chicago Public Schools, Atlanta Public Schools, Baltimore City School District and the School District of Philadelphia.

What makes ERS unique?

- (1) *Our analytical approach:* The core of our practice is to provide in-depth strategic and analytic support to leaders of large urban school systems. We do this by combining extensive knowledge of school systems and educational theory and practice with intensive, quantitative financial and data analysis. To support this work, we have developed analytic techniques, methodologies for mapping resources, and metrics for gauging performance that provide our clients with a unique perspective on how they deploy resources to support their priorities. This unique perspective, combined with ERS developed web and excel based decision support tools, provides district and school leaders clear and actionable information to develop solutions to resource allocation issues.
- (2) *Our collaborative client engagements:* ERS' client engagements are partnerships. We view it as part of our explicit mission to build client capacity to understand and implement effective resource practices. Successful engagements result in clients internalizing our methodology and approach into the way they do business. To accomplish that goal, our approach is very different from the typical grab data, crunch numbers, deliver a report model. Our client engagements frequently last over extended periods with significant contact, including working sessions where we collaboratively grapple over analysis to develop solutions and customized training.
- (3) *Our contribution to the national conversation:* One of ERS' primary missions is to influence the national conversation on district and school resource issues. Our working partnerships with school systems form the bridge between practice and research. Our relationship with clients provides us with access to a wealth of information not otherwise publically available and an unrivalled knowledge of the resource issues facing districts. This experience and the extensive comparative database of resource information and metrics for all of the districts in which we have worked form the foundation of our research and support tool development.

Our headquarters are in Watertown, MA, along the beautiful Charles River and conveniently located to Harvard Square and the Mass Pike. We have a unique work environment; we are committed to high quality in our work and committed to achieving that quality through a flexible environment that values work/life balance. More information about ERS is available at our website:

www.educationresourcestrategies.org