

Baltimore Education Research Consortium (BERC)

Executive Committee Charter

Approved September 18, 2013

This document is a statement of the purpose, role, membership rules, and operating principles that will guide BERC's Executive Committee from September 18, 2013, to June 30, 2018.

Purpose:

The *mission of the Baltimore Education Research Consortium* is to conduct and disseminate long- and short-term strategic data analysis and research that informs decisions about policy and practice to improve the educational and life outcomes of children in Baltimore.

To support BERC's mission, an Executive Committee of nine voting members was created. The *purpose of BERC's Executive Committee* is to serve in both an authority and advisory role to guide BERC's work. In these two important roles, the Committee has primary decision-making responsibility in three areas as well as provides consultation and advice in six areas.

Role:

Specifically, BERC's Executive Committee has *decision-making responsibility and authority* in the following areas:

1. To select the broad research themes and core analytic projects¹ that BERC is pursuing each year.
2. For each approved core analytic project, review and approve the following:
 - a. The scope of the project, and key questions to be pursued (and, if appropriate, an explicit statement of research pursuits that are *not* approved).
 - b. The intended audience(s) to be reached with the research, and its deliverables or products.
 - c. The timeline for completion.

¹ BERC's activities and products fall in three domains: (1) core analytic projects, (2) rapid response services, and (3) outreach/dissemination activities. Core analytic projects are defined as projects lasting 6 months or more in duration, falling under the broad research themes determined by the Executive Committee, intended for a broad, public audience, and requiring significant research capacity or time investments beyond the scope or mandate of that existing at the Baltimore City Public School System (City Schools) or other key partner organizations. Rapid response projects are defined as requests from City Schools leaders, the Board of School Commissioners, local foundations, or other non-profit civic and advocacy groups to prepare data summaries, conduct simple statistical analysis, conduct literature reviews or "stock-taking" of educational practices, or offer consulting on evaluation plans or research designs. Outreach/dissemination activities are defined as presenting spoken or written results to various audiences, contributing to public conversations through providing information to the media or other community groups on BERC and its work, and contributing to local and national policy and research conversations.

- d. The analytic team responsible for the project, typically to include one or two lead authors plus up to three or four additional analysts or research partners.
- e. Expectations about a technical review group assembled to receive progress reports on, and offer critiques and suggestions about, the project.
- f. Plan for complying with all legal, human subjects, and data security requirements.

Additionally, BERC’s Executive Committee is responsible for providing *consultation and advice* in the following areas. The BERC co-directors may add additional areas for Executive Committee consultation as needed:

1. Assisting BERC in effectively carrying out its research agenda by aligning the quantity, pacing, and scope of approved research projects with BERC’s human and other resources.
2. Helping BERC’s research to effectively reach its intended audiences, present relevant and useful findings, and provide information that serves the well-being of the children and families of Baltimore City. In particular, providing feedback and support for developing and implementing successful community engagement and dissemination strategies.
3. Informing BERC’s future strategic plans and priorities, including plans for organizational growth; expanding, contracting, or redirecting BERC’s mission and research efforts; and seeking to establish new strategic partnerships or collaborations that could aid data access, conducting of research, dissemination of findings, or generation of future research priorities.
4. Optimal timing and scope of efforts to seek renewed or additional sources of funding.
5. Providing feedback and non-binding guidance on the BERC Research co-directors’ on Rapid Response projects.
6. Providing feedback and non-binding guidance on topics presented in annual reports by the co-directors to the Executive Committee (see appendix A for example).

Membership:

BERC’s Executive Committee will have nine members, plus a standing invitation to a non-voting representative of BERC’s current funders.

Three members will represent the Baltimore City Public School System (City Schools). These are to be the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the Chief Academic Officer (CAO), and the Accountability Officer (the Officer for the Division of Research, Evaluation, Assessment, and Accountability).

Three members will represent BERC’s college and university partners (hereafter “university partners”). The three members will be chosen by the university partners. At least one of these positions will represent one of the historically Black institutions of higher learning in the Baltimore metropolitan area. The three members must come from at least two different universities or colleges. While there will not be term limits or a scheduled rotation of service for the university representatives, the other members of the Executive Committee (i.e., City Schools and civic/community partners) can inform the university

partners or BERC's current funders that they find a change of university leadership to be advisable. Such a communication would be taken as non-binding but to be considered seriously.

Three members will represent civic or community partners. Civic or community partners would typically come from city or state government agencies (other than City Schools), non-profit and/or grassroots advocacy groups, or the business community. For the inaugural membership of the Executive Committee, civic/community representatives have been identified and invited by the City Schools and university partners. Future members will be identified, approved, and invited by the remaining Executive Committee members, not including the member who is leaving the Committee.

To ensure greater continuity of membership from year to year, the terms of members representing civic or community partners shall have staggered end-dates such that the terms of all three civic/community representatives will not end in any given year. Members' terms shall be approximately three years in length, beginning from their acceptance of the invitation to join the Committee and ending on the final day of May. There shall be the possibility of a renewal of up to three years.²

Executive Committee Operating Principles:

1. The Committee will meet two to three times per year, with additional meetings scheduled as needed.
2. Meetings will be scheduled at least one month in advance.
3. Members will receive an agenda and other pre-meeting materials from BERC's co-directors 10 days before each scheduled meeting.
4. It is expected that members of the Executive Committee will make every effort to attend scheduled meetings. If a member is unable to attend a scheduled meeting, (s)he then has the option of sending a designee to take his/her place at the meeting (with full voting rights).
5. Meetings will be considered official, and votes or decisions considered binding if and only if the following conditions are met:
 - a. Each of the three constituencies (City Schools, university partners, and civic/community partners) has at least one representative present, and
 - b. At least five voting members of the Executive Committee are present.
6. Formal votes should be held for any research project that is to become an official BERC project. Also, formal votes may be called for on other matters that relate to the Executive Committee's primary areas of responsibility and authority (see p.1-2 of this document). The Committee will seek to reach consensus on all proposals put forth for a formal vote. When consensus cannot be reached, a majority of present and non-abstaining votes will determine a binding decision. The one exception to this "majority rule" principle is that the CEO of City Schools has the explicit prerogative to veto a proposed research agenda or project, per the

² Renewal will be based on a vote cast by the other 8 voting members and requires a majority vote.

Memorandum of Understanding currently approved by the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners.

7. Members may be contacted by the executive director for consultation or input to decisions, or to provide updates, by phone, mail, or e-mail. It is expected that members will review, and when requested reply, to such communication within seven business days. In the case of issues requiring a vote occurring outside of regular meeting times, the co-directors will clearly signal a voting issue and votes may be cast via e-mail. The guidelines for binding decisions described in point 6 will hold for any votes occurring via e-mail as well.
8. Meetings should start and end at times agreed in advance.
9. Each member of the Executive Committee may bring one (but not more than one) non-voting colleague to meetings (e.g., for purposes of taking notes, providing background information, or offering opinions on the feasibility and potential impact of proposed research projects). If any member would like additional colleagues to be present for a particular agenda item, approval should be requested from the co-directors in advance of the meeting.
10. Official meeting minutes will be taken by a BERC staff member from the universities. Transcribed minutes will be circulated to all Executive Committee members. Any needed corrections or additions will be made. Minutes from one meeting will be approved by formal vote at the following meeting.
11. A meeting will be moderated by the BERC Executive Director unless it is a special session called or requested by another member of the Executive Committee. In the case of a special session called or requested by another member, that person shall moderate the meeting and provide an agenda and any pre-reading materials to other members in advance of the meeting per the above guideline.