

Michael Walsh McGarrah

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Education

Ph.D. in Human Development, Learning & Teaching, Harvard University, 2023

Dissertation: ‘The Development of Internalizing and Externalizing Symptoms in Middle Childhood and Substance Use Prior to Middle School Entry’

Dissertation Committee: Dr. Stephanie M. Jones, Dr. Leah H. Somerville, Dr. Dana C. McCoy

CORE Credential of Business Readiness, Harvard Business School Online, High Honors, 2020

B.A. in Child Psychology, University of Minnesota, 2012

Summa Cum Laude, with Distinction, Phi Beta Kappa

Honors Thesis: “The Development of Emotion Regulation and Children’s Age-Related Performance on the Emotional Interference Task”

Thesis Advisors: Dr. Philip D. Zelazo and Dr. Stephanie M. Carlson

Professional and Research Experience

Study Director & Statistician, U.S. Department of Education **04/2022–Present**

- Direct the Crime and Safety Surveys Program at the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), collaborating with the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the Census Bureau, managing contractors and setting the strategic plan for data collection and dissemination of results for the School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey
- Manage 12 multi-year contracts, as the Contracting Officer’s Representative (COR), with budgets totaling \$50 million, within the Cross-Sectional Surveys Branch at NCES
- Develop, compete out, and oversee award of government contracts, ensuring conformity with Federal Acquisition Regulations, verifying that appropriate research designs and statistical specifications are included in proposals, and that contractor qualifications and performance meet strict standards
- Supervise the publication review process for the Administrative Data Division at NCES and advise on the redesign of NCES’ web-based publication review management system

Visiting Scholar, Harvard University **05/2022–Present**

- Developing and disseminating research on early warning signs for substance use among elementary and middle school students

Independent Research Consultant **02/2019–Present**

- Leading the psychometric validation study of a tablet-based battery of tests designed to detect early reading and other cognitive deficits (AppRISE) as a part of the MIT Applied Educational Neuroscience Initiative
- Served as content expert on social and emotional skills for IDinsight, an international development consulting firm located in San Francisco, CA, in collaboration with the State of Jharkhand, India, to develop a program evaluation study design and set of survey tools aimed at assessing the effectiveness of a state-wide program to foster social and emotional development among 1,616,068 students in 4,946 secondary schools using a sample of 100,000 students and

Last updated: July 2023

30,000 teachers for the initial pilot program in Jharkand state

- Advised the Research Director of the Carroll School, in Lincoln, MA, on the quantitative program evaluation of a curriculum designed to improve literacy outcomes for middle school students with dyslexia
- Co-designed the outcome surveys for Global Citizen Year, a prominent “gap year” program for pre-college, high school graduates, located in Oakland, CA, with special emphasis on capturing the development of social and emotional, or “soft,” skills
- Directed the quantitative program evaluation of Global Citizen Year, with a special focus on pre-post changes in social and emotional skills among students of color and low-SES students

Doctoral Student Researcher, Harvard University

08/2017–04/2022

- Led quantitative analysis of a nationally representative survey of social and emotional learning (SEL) program implementation in U.S. public elementary schools, cleaning, reshaping, and tabulating summaries of data, as well as inspecting psychometric properties of the survey instruments, employing mixed effects regression, checking the statistical accuracy of team members’ work, and writing up and presenting findings to the lab team and funder
- Repurposed an Institute of Education Sciences (IES) dataset, the Social and Character Development (SACD) study, to evaluate the longitudinal, quasi-causal relationship between emergent internalizing and externalizing psychopathology and substance use prior to middle school entry
- Co-authored a journal article published in the Educational Psychologist focused on scaling up social and emotional learning initiatives in K-12 schools, which won the Best Paper of the Year award from the American Psychological Association’s educational psychology division

Research and Policy Associate, The Aspen Institute

08/2016–08/2017

- Led the research team for the National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development
- Analyzed and synthesized the literature on social and emotional learning (SEL), spanning multiple academic disciplines, including developmental, clinical, and educational psychology, and also prevention science, neuroscience, medicine, and economics
- Prepared briefs on SEL for the Executive Directors and the Vice President
- Authored a background document on social and emotional learning that received high praise from members of the Council of Distinguished Scientists, including Angela Duckworth, Marc Brackett, and Mark Greenberg, and which served as the core messaging document for the Commission when advocating for SEL policies
- Authored a set of guided readings about SEL that were reviewed positively by the Commissioners, including Linda Darling-Hammond, Hugh Price, and General Craig McKinley, and which anchored meetings with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District

Research Associate, American Institutes for Research

07/2013–08/2016

- Developed survey items related to self-regulation, self-efficacy, and achievement motivation for the National Assessment of Educational Progress, in collaboration with the Educational Testing Service and the National Center for Education Statistics
- Published two empirical evaluations of higher education spending patterns and the employment of contingent faculty at institutions of higher education in the U.S., utilizing the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), conducting all analyses in Stata
- Developed items for principal and teacher surveys for an Institute of Education Sciences randomized controlled trial intervention on teacher and principal professional development and

academic standards implementation (i.e., Common Core); led survey rollout across multiple states; coded over 100 hours of teacher classroom practice recordings using the Framework for Teaching (FFT) evaluation rubric

- Published a brief on practice and policy issues related to the assessment of social and emotional skills in children and adolescents, a guide to building and maintaining such assessment systems, and an inventory of evidence-based assessments
- Managed funding and staff and successfully recompleted a \$6,000,000 U.S. Department of Education technical assistance center (the College and Career Readiness and Success Center)
- Authored reports and led presentations for a variety of clients, including the U.S. Department of Education; Institute of Education Sciences; National Center for Education Statistics; Office of Elementary and Secondary Education; Office of Special Education Programs; Office of Educational Technology; Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education; Kansas State Department of Education; California Department of Education; The TIAA Institute; The Joyce Foundation; and The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Fulbright Scholar, U.S. Department of State, Government of Madrid, Spain 09/2012–07/2013

- Led professional development on language acquisition and teaching English as a second language for teachers in the Madrid bilingual public school system
- Instructed classes for middle and high school students across all subject areas in English and Spanish

Early Childhood Education Policy Intern, Children’s Defense Fund 06/2011–09/2011

- Authored a white paper on the effectiveness of full day kindergarten programs, which was used as a guiding policy and advocacy document for the firm
- Prepared materials for, and attended briefings and meetings with, members of the U.S. Congress related to critical early childhood education policy initiatives, including full-day kindergarten scale-up and pre-k access

Research Assistant, Institute of Child Development, Univ. of Minnesota 01/2011–09/2012

- Developed a measure of emotion regulation (the Emotional Interference Task) for use with young children; a measure consisting of sequentially presented, differently-valenced affective pictures, paired with a cognitive task, measuring the differential reaction times associated with the cognitive task, by affective valence, as a proxy for emotion regulation ability
- Designed and programmed the computer-delivered assessment for the Emotional Interference Task using e-Prime software
- Recruited over 100 participants for the Emotional Interference Task; administered the task and collected, coded, and analyzed all experimental data using SPSS
- Conducted state-by-state policy and program analysis of pre-k–3rd-grade systems in U.S. Public Schools for the Chicago Longitudinal Study, led by Dr. Arthur J. Reynolds
- Consulted with Dr. Phil Zelazo to scale up the Emotional Interference Task and pursue publication in a peer-reviewed journal
- Coded video recordings of a mindfulness training intervention for young children
- Directed a task exploring adult personality self-perception utilizing skin conductance measures

Working Papers

McGarrah, M.W., Jones, S. M., McCoy, D., & Somerville, L. “Integrating the internalizing and externalizing pathways to early-onset substance use: A dynamic developmental cascades model.” Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

McGarrah, M.W., Jones, S. M., McCoy, D., & Somerville, L. “Bi-directional influences of internalizing and externalizing symptoms and subsequent early-onset substance use: A latent trajectory model with structured residuals.” Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

McGarrah, M.W., Jones, S. M., McCoy, D., & Somerville, L. “A person-centered analysis of the internalizing and externalizing pathways to early-onset substance use: A parallel process growth mixture model.” Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

Whillans, A., Yemiscigil, A., **McGarrah, M.W.**, & Johnston, E. “Response shift bias and the measurement of change in socio-emotional outcomes in a gap year program.” Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

Peer-Reviewed Publications

Jones, S. M., **McGarrah, M.W.**, & Kahn, J. (2019). “Social and emotional learning: A principled science of human development in context.” *Educational Psychologist*, 54(3), 129-143.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2019.1625776>

Reports

Hurlburt, S., & **McGarrah, M.W.** (2016). “Cost savings or cost shifting? The relationship between part-time contingent faculty and institutional spending.” New York, NY: TIAA Institute.
<https://www.tiaainstitute.org/publication/cost-savings-or-cost-shifting>

Hurlburt, S., & **McGarrah, M.W.** (2016). “The shifting academic workforce: Where are the contingent faculty?” New York, NY: TIAA Institute. <https://www.tiaainstitute.org/publication/shifting-academic-workforce>

McGarrah, M.W., & Moroney, D. A. (2015). “Are you ready to assess social and emotional development? Stop. Think. Act.” Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.
<https://www.air.org/resource/are-you-ready-assess-social-and-emotional-learning-and-development-second-edition>

McGarrah, M.W. (2015). “Lifelong learning skills for college and career readiness: Considerations for education policy.” Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. <https://ccrscenter.org/products-resources/lifelong-learning-skills-college-and-career-readiness-considerations-education>

Cushing, E. C., **McGarrah, M.W.**, Foster, L. R., & Jacques, C. (2015). “Integrating employability skills: A framework for all educators.” Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.
<https://ccrscenter.org/products-resources/lifelong-learning-skills-college-and-career-readiness-considerations-education>

McGarrah, M.W. (2014). “Lifelong learning skills for college and career readiness: An annotated bibliography.” Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. <https://ccrscenter.org/technical-assistance-networks/professional-learning-modules/integrating-employability-skills>

McGarrah, M.W. (2012). “The development of emotion regulation & children’s age-related performance on the emotional interference task.” (Undergraduate Honors Thesis). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Digital Conservancy. <https://conservancy.umn.edu/handle/11299/183083>

McGarrah, M.W. (2012). “The case for full-day kindergarten: A review of research.” [White paper]. Washington, DC: Children’s Defense Fund.

Professional Presentations

Johnston, E. F., **McGarrah, M.W.**, Yemiscigil, A., & Whillans, A. (2020, November). “When quant and qual collide: Response shift bias and the measurement of change in gap year participants.” Gap Year Association Conference (online). Portland, OR.

McGarrah, M.W. (2019, May). “Examining early predictors of substance use in elementary school: Psychosocial characteristics and quality of student-teacher relationships.” Association for Psychological Science Annual Conference. Washington, DC.

McGarrah, M.W. (2016, April). “Creating the conditions for social and emotional learning: Why it matters and how to bring it to afterschool and expanded learning environments.” Horizons National Annual Conference. Atlanta, GA.

Cushing, E. C., **McGarrah, M.W.**, Foster, L. R., & Jacques, C. (2015, May). “Integrating the employability skills framework: A professional learning module for all educators.” Presented at the Kansas Department of Education. Topeka, KA.

Cushing, E. C., **McGarrah, M.W.**, Foster, L. R., & Jacques, C. (2015, April). “Integrating the employability skills framework: A professional learning module for all educators.” U.S. Department of Education LINCS Conference. Minneapolis, MN.

Teaching Experience

Teaching Fellow, Harvard Graduate School of Education (2019–2022). Courses taught include:

Spring 2020, Fall 2020	Developmental Insights, Professor Stephanie Jones
Spring 2020	Beyond Grit: Non-Cognitive Factors in School Success, Professor Stephanie Jones
Fall 2020, Fall 2019	Typical and Atypical Neurodevelopment, Professors Charles Nelson and Nadine Gaab
Fall 2020, Fall 2019	Developmental Psychology, Professor Paul L. Harris

Academic Service

2021–2023	Graduate Student Affiliate, Harvard Institute for Quantitative Social Science
2021–2023	Invited Committee Member, Harvard GSAS Task Force on Scholarship Restart
2021–2023	Advisor to the Council, Harvard Graduate Student Council
2021–2023	Graduate Student Advisor, Harvard Graduate School of Education
2020–2023	Invited Committee Member, Harvard FAS Task Force on Visual Culture and Signage
2020–2021	Vice President, Harvard Graduate Student Council
2020	Invited Reviewer: Educational Psychologist; Psychometrika
2019–2020	At-Large Representative for Interdisciplinary Studies, Harvard Graduate Student Council

Certifications And Languages

2023	Teaching Certificate, Derek Bok Center for Teaching & Learning, Harvard University
2022	Contracting Officer’s Representative (COR) Level II, Federal Acquisition Institute

2014 Certified Rater, Framework for Teaching (FFT), The Danielson Group
2012 Proficient in Spanish, University of Minnesota Diploma Credential

Honors and Awards

2020 APA Division 15 Best Paper of the Year Award: Jones, McGarrah, and Kahn (2019)
2019 Elected Member, Sigma Xi National Scientific Honor Society
2019 Honorable Mention, NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program
2016 Exceptional Service in Staff Development, American Institutes for Research
2015 Exceptional Service in Research and Evaluation, American Institutes for Research
2014 Exceptional Service in Technical Assistance, American Institutes for Research
2012 Fulbright Scholarship, U. S. Department of State, Government of Madrid, Spain
2012 Elected Member, Phi Beta Kappa, Alpha of Minnesota
2010 Outstanding Leader of a Student Health Group, University of Minnesota