Lessons Learned During the Launch of the Baltimore Education Research Consortium

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BERC is a partnership of...

- Johns Hopkins University,
- Morgan State University,
- Baltimore City Public Schools,
- other Baltimore-based advocacy and non-profit organizations.

- Co-directors S. Plank (JHU) and
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Eight Core Analytic Projects

	Administrative Data	New Data Collection / Mixed Methods
Keeping On Track after First Grade Success	1A	1B
Middle Grades Predictors of High School Readiness and Graduation	2A	2B
Keeping On Track in Ninth Grade and Beyond	3A	3B
Understanding the Process of Dropping Out	4A	4B

Rapid Response Tasks in addition to Core Analytic Projects.

Counterproductive or Not Useful to a Local School District

- Chasing headlines as an end in itself.
- Acquiring data for academic article with no plan or desire to engage in local conversations.
- Small technical quibbles without a broader point.
- Springing surprises; "Gotcha" moments.
- Seeking to be (or unwittingly becoming) the only go-to source in town.

Good / Productive / Readily Appreciated

- "Cockroach studies"
- Rapid Response projects when district research office does not have time/capacity.
- Translating district leaders' questions/priorities into specific research designs.
- Importing useful metrics or approaches from other locales.
- Closed-door briefings in advance of public reports.

Good, Even if Generating Some Discomfort

- Developing alternative ways to measure and track some important outcome.
  - Patiently making the case for its use.
- Being just a little bit pushy about saying, "Let us evaluate or study this bold, promising initiative of yours."
- Expanding the set of variables, phenomena, social settings being studied.