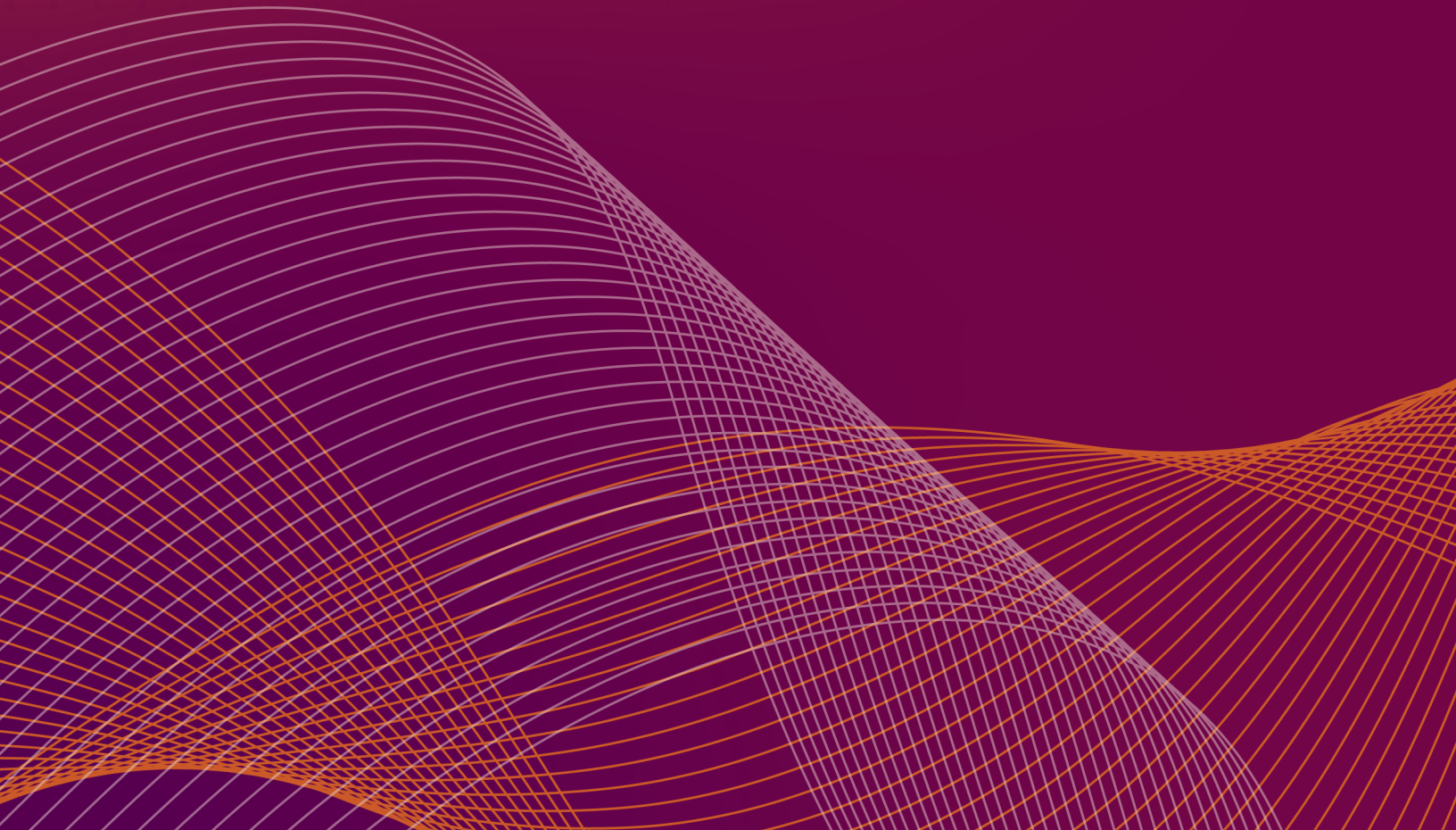




Making Waves in 2023: RPPL's End of Year Report



Letter From the Executive Director

If there is one thing I'm leaving 2023 more sure about than ever, it is that we are better and stronger when we work in collaboration. Serving my first full year as the Executive Director of the Research Partnership for Professional Learning (RPPL), a collaborative of professional learning (PL) organizations, researchers, school and district leaders, and funders, has been an honor. I've witnessed not only the dedication our partnership has shown to advancing educational equity, but also our shared commitment to breaking down silos in service of improving student experiences and outcomes through teacher PL.

As a collective, we understand the pressure K-12 educators are under to equitably lead their classrooms and improve student outcomes. It's within this context that RPPL is making a collaborative and coordinated effort to set the standard for what practical equity-based and research-backed PL looks like. In 2023, RPPL focused on laying a strong foundation for this work. We grew our collaborative, extending RPPL's network across the country and promoting the importance of coming together to advance the PL field at scale. We held our first in-person convening for researchers, PL practitioners, and school and district leaders to discuss how we are creating a bridge from research to the classroom to advance professional learning and help teachers address urgent student learning needs.

Crucial to the foundation we laid in 2023 was our work to amend our mission, vision, values, and equity statement. RPPL can only lead others toward evidence-based learning and teaching more equitably if we're aligned on what that means to us. RPPL is excited by the opportunities 2024 presents to continue bringing these values — **advancing educational equity, building a collaborative community, learning with humility, and sharing practical evidence-based solutions** — to life.

I am delighted to share this year's annual report, which celebrates all of the progress our incredible team of collaborators has made over this past year and shares what we're looking forward to accomplishing in 2024. I encourage you to reach out with any questions or thoughts you may have — RPPL is always looking for opportunities to more deeply partner and learn from our community. As you read, please join us in not only imagining a world in which every student feels like they belong and are given the opportunity to succeed, but help us build a future in which that is the reality. **Only when we each make a ripple, can we collectively make a wave.**



In service and
with gratitude,
Stacey Alicea
Executive Director

Our Progress in 2023

Our work in 2023 was grounded in both our mission to advance educational equity and the RPPL learning agenda. This year, we set out to execute our slate of research studies; build our ecosystem to enable us to do more, better, and faster research within RPPL's network; and develop meaningful partnerships and alliances with a broad range of PL actors that would lead to more opportunities to connect, study, build capacity, and learn.



We made great progress in achieving these goals:



Research

11 of 15 studies underway measuring teacher practice and student learning; 4 preparing to launch



Measurement

1,073 downloads of the measurement white paper developed by a working group of 10 organizations



Ecosystem

Expanded to **68 affiliates** who attended 14 shared learning opportunities



Fundraising

100% of funding secured for 2023 and 2024; more than half raised for 2025

Research That Makes a Difference

Study Spotlights

In 2023, RPPL made progress on a number of research studies, all of which aim to identify teacher PL best practices that measurably impact student experiences and outcomes. Highlights from this year include:



Leading Educators Wise Feedback Study

With Dr. Greg Walton and Dr. David Kalkstein from Stanford University, Leading Educators completed a pilot phase of a study on “wise feedback”, asking what supports enable teachers to better use cognitive science findings around students’ sense of belonging to deliver better critical feedback to students. Leading Educators found that with the right support, teachers’ beliefs about and confidence in critical feedback were significantly improved, as were PL completion rates.



Teaching Lab Math Study

Working with Dr. David Blazar of the University of Maryland, Teaching Lab conducted a randomized controlled trial on whether participation in a curriculum-based PL series focused on math identity, mathematical language routines, and culturally responsive education shifts teacher beliefs and practices, as well as student outcomes. With teachers from New Mexico, they found that students whose teachers participated in the PL series reported that their teachers engaged in culturally responsive and sustaining education practices significantly more than students whose teachers had not. They also had significantly higher self-efficacy in mathematics.

Laying the Foundation for Effective Research

With funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, RPPL has begun **creating an infrastructure** that will accelerate meaningful and impactful research between PL organizations. We’re working in partnership with learning engineers at the University of Pennsylvania to unpack our learning agenda into a set of parameters that can be turned into an application for testing with RPPL partners. Infrastructure development, including data collection tool standardization; de-identification of data; data use and data access protocols; data collection and storage strategy; privacy protection tools; and protocols for collective use are underway. In 2024, we will have:



A first version of a secure data infrastructure with privacy protection for the sharing of data at scale ready for testing.



A standardized set of measurement instruments that can be used across PL organizations.

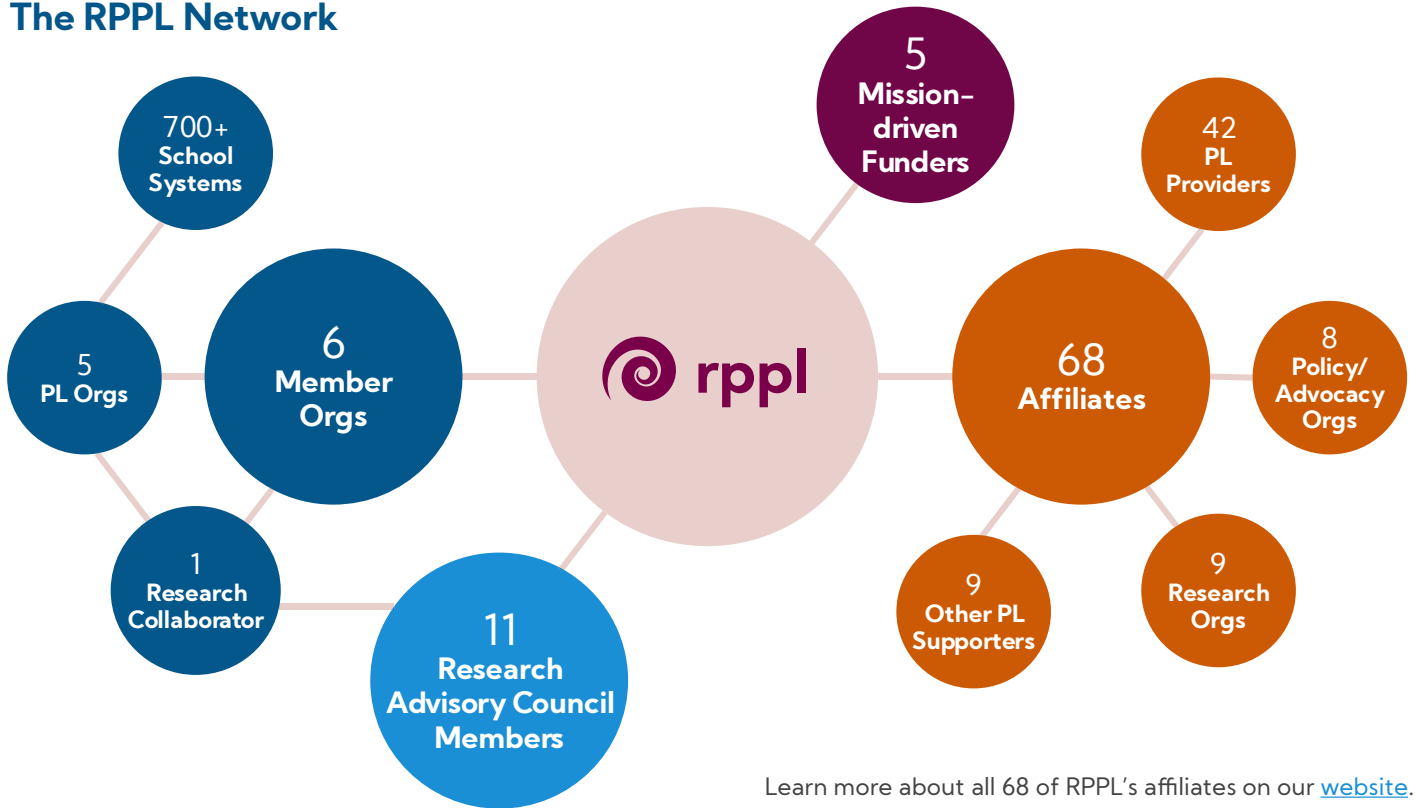


Systems and tools to broaden access among researchers and PL organizations to share standardized data.

SECTION 2

Strengthening RPPL's Ecosystem

The RPPL Network



Learn more about all 68 of RPPL's affiliates on our [website](#).

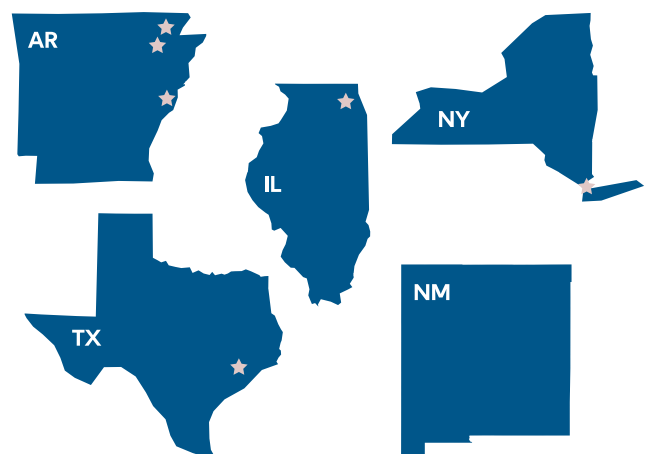
RPPL's Newest Affiliates

In 2023, RPPL expanded its network to welcome 12 new affiliates, including PL practitioners, researchers, and foundations.



School System Partners

We are engaging in research with school system partners from across five states:



RPPL's First-Ever Network-Wide Convening

RPPL convened over 50 attendees from 29 organizations for a day of learning and discussion on the future of PL and the crucial role cross-field collaboration will play in setting a standard for excellent and equitable PL across the country.



Attendees of RPPL's 2023 network convening.

TNTP shared how they effectively engaged Arkansas Local Education Agencies (LEAs) by focusing on the intersection between their internal analysis and alignment of district priorities through relationship-building strategies. In doing so, the collaborative study aligned with three key areas of RPPL's learning agenda: accelerating teacher skill development and practice, sustaining changes to teacher and student outcomes, and setting the right conditions for adult learning.



TNTP's presentation on "LEA Engagement in 'Big R' Research: Leveraging Internal Analyses and Relationships for Successful Implementation".

2023 Learning Forward Conference

RPPL's network of PL experts also made a splash at the 2023 Learning Forward Conference, with 12 organizations in the RPPL network presenting and leading sessions on a range of topics from transforming PL implementation to equitable teaching practices.

Session Highlight



Teaching Lab



RPPL member Teaching Lab and Chicago Public Schools — one of the few large urban school systems providing high-quality curriculum that centers culturally responsive and sustaining educational practices in all grades and subjects — discussed the importance of curriculum-based professional learning models in driving continuous improvement and instructional coherence.

Building a PL Ecosystem

Engagement by the Numbers

165

attendees/viewers of Measurement webinar

11

Brown Bags hosted, avg. 64 live attendees per session

+41%

increase in X (formerly Twitter) followers

+132%

increase in LinkedIn followers

+65%

increase in newsletter subscribers

9,000+

visits to RPPL's website

3,500+

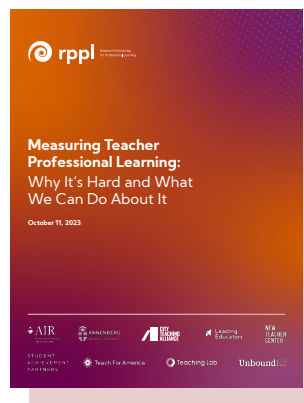
digital publication downloads

Our 2023 Publications



[RPPL Studies: 2023-25 Portfolio](#)

Our RPPL studies portfolio lays out a catalog of studies we hope to accomplish in an effort to understand what works in PL and how to lead PL providers to align their methods to our evidence-based findings at scale.



[Measuring Teacher Professional Learning: Why It's Hard and What We Can Do About It](#)

Leaders from 10 PL organizations share insights on the measurement challenges practitioners face, identify areas for improvement, and introduce strategies the entire education field can apply in order to improve PL measurement.

RPPL in the Media



The TeachThought Podcast

[Ep. 321 Improving Teacher Learning \(1/25\)](#)



Psychology Today

[When Teachers Learn Better, Students Do Better \(3/25\)](#)



EducationWeek

[Teacher Professional Development, Explained \(7/26\)](#)



District Administration

[Superintendent's Playbook: 5 Ways to Connect PD to Student Learning \(10/19\)](#)



Thomas Fordham Institute

[Using Artificial Intelligence to Measure the Effectiveness of Professional Learning \(11/14\)](#)

RPPL Affiliate Needs Assessment

RPPL's affiliates are essential to the collaborative's ability to affect change. Knowing this, we conducted an affiliate needs assessment to understand who our affiliates are, determine opportunities for collaboration and capacity building, and determine RPPL's strengths and areas of improvement in engaging with our affiliates. What we learned from 60 organizations inspired us to expand research and working group opportunities for affiliates and provide spaces for diversified shared learning.



Stance on Education Equity

We asked our affiliates, **to what extent does your organization's statement on educational equity show up in your day-to-day work?**

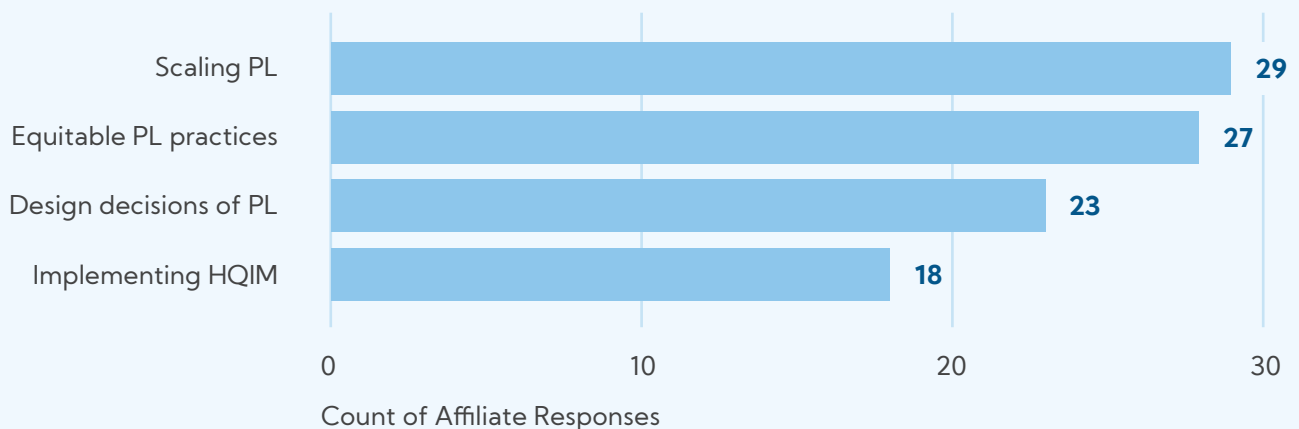
- 70%** It exists and we use the statement to make organizational decisions
- 15.7%** It is in development
- 5.9%** It exists
- 2%** We don't have one yet
- 7.8%** Other

76.5% of respondents have equity statements

Of those organizations, the most common words and phrases in their statements are:

- Equal access
- Meeting students' needs
- Opportunity, opportunity gaps
- High-quality instruction
- Community
- Systemic inequities, systems-level change
- Support
- Equity in practice
- Culturally responsive

When it comes to teacher PL, what problems of practice are your organizations wondering about?



SECTION 3

Growing RPPL's Team

Who We Are

RPPL used 2023 to solidify the foundation of our collaborative and establish who we are and what we stand for. We're excited to share our updated vision, mission, and values, and will publish our [equity statement](#) on RPPL's new website, coming in 2024.

Vision

We envision a world where all students and educators are valued, supported, engaged, and thriving in equitable, rigorous, and joyful learning environments that prepare them to be successful lifelong learners

Mission

RPPL is a collective of PL practitioners, researchers, educators, and funders committed to advancing educational equity for every student, including students who are Black, Latine, Indigenous, AAPI, multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and students experiencing poverty. Together, we study teacher and educator learning to identify, share, and enact PL that improves teachers' instructional practices and students' classroom experiences, well-being, and academic growth.

Values

Advance Educational Equity: We conduct research that identifies effective PL design features proven to increase instructional practices that meet each student's unique needs and improve academic, social, and economic outcomes for all students, including students who are Black, Latine, Indigenous, AAPI, multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and students experiencing poverty.

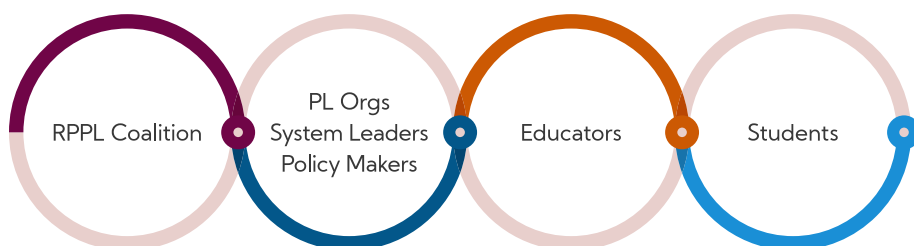
Build a Collaborative Community: We are a diverse and inclusive network of professional learning practitioners, researchers, educators, and funders creating a community where we collaborate with care as equals, honor each individual's unique identity and perspective, and value all voices.

Learn with Humility: We are committed to listening to varied perspectives, engaging in self-reflection, learning from many forms of experience and expertise, and leaning into honest conversations in order to conduct research that does not confirm our biases, but rather challenges our assumptions and pushes boundaries to grow the professional learning community.

Share Practical Evidence-Based Solutions: We are dedicated to generating professional learning solutions that are rooted in evidence and data and presented in a way that is actionable and accessible for educators of all backgrounds.

Theory of Action

In 2023, we clarified [RPPL's theory of action](#) to describe how our collective efforts influence the broader education sector to drive equitable student outcomes.



RPPL's New Team Members

In 2023, we added four new members to RPPL's central team:



Krista Morales
Network Engagement
& Learning Manager

"I believe in the power of RPPL's network because, like teachers, PL organizations need spaces to learn, collaborate, and build community."



Dr. Camea Davis
Director of Equitable Research-
Practice Partnerships

"I am looking forward to helping RPPL actualize our commitment to equity in all we do, especially research practice partnership!"



Annice Correia Gabel
Director of Operations,
Finance, & Strategy

"I joined RPPL because I want to help build an organization that centers educational equity while it strives to connect research and evidence to teachers' and students' everyday experiences in classrooms."



Crystal Depay
Operations & Grants Manager

"At its core, RPPL's mission and vision align with my belief that the educational community should make a greater effort to promote equity for ALL students."

The Annenberg Institute at Brown University, RPPL's research collaborator, grew its [RPPL-focused research team](#) to six members, three of whom joined us in 2023:



Dr. Arielle Boguslav
Senior Research Associate

"I'm so lucky to get to work with such thoughtful and dedicated colleagues at AIB, RPPL central, and RPPL's partner organizations – every day I have the opportunity to learn something new and contribute to the learning of others."



Brendon Krall
Research Project Manager

"I share the belief that teachers are the single largest school-based driver of student achievement."



Carolyn Fagan
Research Project Manager

"After 20 years as a classroom teacher and instructional coach, I am excited to advance RPPL's learning agenda in support of educators and students."

Looking Ahead to 2024

2024 Goals

1 Cross-Workstream Enabling Conditions: We hope to engage school systems both directly and through our partnership with PL organizations to establish co-designed PL research and learning. We will be generating new tools, structures, and systems that support our research and learning while ensuring our work is grounded in equitable frameworks, processes, and practices.

2 Research: In 2024 we hope to execute cross-organization studies and test approaches to developing short, mid, and long-term research learnings.

3 Ecosystem Learning and Development: We hope to build collective action by continuing to offer and improve shared learning activities within and outside of our RPPL network.

Upcoming Research

- RPPL is building out a [portfolio](#) of studies, based on our learning agenda, that together will provide insights into how to scale effective professional learning in key areas of practice.
- In 2024, RPPL is launching two anchor studies that focus on social accountability and teacher agency.

The Annenberg Institute Professional Learning Spending Study: There is a common perception that we spend a lot on teacher PL each year. However, what we actually know about spending on PL is largely limited to a few case studies that explored spending in a handful of schools and districts, the patterns of which may not reflect spending in the

rest of the country. Furthermore, we know little about how PL spending varies across districts or over time. Researchers at the Annenberg Institute at Brown are using national district finance data collected by NCES to explore these questions; results will be shared in the spring.

- **2024 RFP Launch for Contributing Studies:** We will be releasing a new RFP for five, two-year grants for research-practice partnerships in our network to conduct mixed methods experimental and quasi-experimental studies. This process will be shepherded by RPPL's new Director of Equitable Research-Practice Partnerships, Dr. Camea Davis.

Building the PL Ecosystem in 2024

For Members & Affiliates: We're kicking off a monthly working group to troubleshoot, design, and enact enabling conditions solutions core to RPPL's ability to successfully execute research studies. This group will address 1) district engagement, 2) shared measurement, and 3) data & infrastructure. We'll also be hosting a series of webinars that highlight our learnings in 2024, as well as RPPL's second annual convening; stay tuned for more information!

For Affiliates: We're kicking off Network Co-Labs as a learning community space.

For the Field: We'll be convening a working group of practitioners, researchers, and funders that aims to build field consensus around the definition of a high-quality PL system, culminating in a position paper that will be shared widely.

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 team@rpplpartnership.org

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