

Global Education Policy Leadership Program

Going Gradeless: Examining Norway's System of High Trust Accountability 2024 Program Description

Program Co-Coordinator

Robert J. Monson, Ph.D
Retired Senior Lecturer in Education Leadership
Teachers College, Columbia University
rjm210@tc.columbia.edu (203) 536-8747 (cell)

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Daniel Schultz
Senior Policy and Program Advisor
Office of K-12 Outreach, College of Education
Michigan State University
dws@msu.edu (517) 214-2963 (cell)

Norway's public education system has been described by the Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development (OECD) as one organized in a "high trust accountability" culture. Better understanding this dynamic in the context of other shared values of the Nordic countries and exploring how Norwegian national policy initiatives are designed to improve student literacy and assessment in primary and secondary schools, and how teachers and school leaders are prepared to support these efforts will be examined during the 2024 program.

Purpose of the Program

The Global Education Policy Leadership Program (Global EPLP) is an international education policy and leadership-oriented program that annually provides a focused professional development opportunity for a small, diverse group of academics, research associates, and education leaders to examine innovative education policy strategies and current challenges facing the host country. Participants acquire a broader global perspective by studying education policy initiatives in economically developed and developing countries.

Program Goals and Expectations for 2024

In this post-pandemic period of international reflection and change, the 2024 Global EPLP will focus on Norway's challenges and experiences in using a decentralized school and community-based improvement approach. The "Going Gradeless" initiative has its origins in Norwegian national law which bans grades in the first seven years of schooling (ages 6-12) and places a strong emphasis on teacher judgement in assessment, with 80% of diplomas based on teacher grades and 20% derived from external exams.

The 2024 Global EPLP will engage Senior Fellows with school leaders and university researchers in Oslo and Trondheim who are engaged in these and other initiatives, including the:

- Legal Requirement for Assessment for Learning

- Participatory Dialogue Process Between Students and Teachers
- Academic vs Vocational Tracks
- Philosophy of Engaging in Risky Play
- Challenges of Social Media and the Gender Gap in Science and Technology
- Tradition of Collaboration Between Higher Education and Government



Through participation in a series of monthly 2-hour Zoom predeparture meetings (August, September, and October), an October in-country field study, and a post-trip November Zoom debriefing, the 2024 Global EPLP Senior Fellows will:

- Engage with policy leaders shaping Norway’s school reform efforts, with particular emphasis on student engagement, assessment, and teacher preparation practices.
- Observe classroom teaching, learning and assessment practices that seek to optimize learning for each young person.
- Develop a deeper perspective on the United States’ and Norway’s efforts to ensure its schools and students are globally competitive.
- Examine how Norwegian schools, universities and communities work together to improve programs and services designed to prepare young people for success in life.
- Develop networking relationships with influential Norwegian education leaders, researchers, cultural experts, and policymakers.

Schedule of Global EPLP Meetings in 2024 (Dates are tentative and subject to change, except for the trip)

Note: ***All times are in the Eastern Time Zone.*** Meeting times were selected to enable policy experts from Norway to participate in the meetings, given the 5-hour time difference.

A series of two-hour meetings will be held on-line using Zoom software communications. Each session is designed to help prepare participants for the field study in Norway as well as a post-visit program analysis and synthesis.

Friday, August 23, 2024. 10:00AM to 12:00 Noon Program orientation, introductions, and expectations. An introduction to Norwegian culture and education. Guest Expert: Dr. Henning Fjørtoft, Professor of Literacy Education and Norwegian Didactics, Department of Teacher Education, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Trondheim, Norway

Friday, September 13, 2024. 10:00AM to 12:00 Noon The education policy agenda in Norway. Guest Expert: TBA

Friday, October 4, 2024. 10:00AM to 12:00 Noon

Guest Expert: TBA

Thursday, October 17 - Saturday, October 26, 2024, Field Study in Oslo & Trondheim Norway

The field study is designed to provide Senior Fellows with an opportunity to:

- Develop relationships with educators in both basic and tertiary levels.
- Attend briefings at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and leading education policy organizations, visit primary and secondary schools, and cultural sites.
- Collect data related to the optional Global EPLP policy analysis project.



October 2024 Global EPLP Norway Tentative Day-By-Day Itinerary

Thursday, October 17, 2024 - DEPART USA

Departure and connecting flights from the U.S. to Oslo International Airport (OSL)

Friday, October 18, 2024 – ARRIVE Oslo

Morning: Early morning arrival, baggage claim, complete immigration/customs requirements. Meet the local representative in arrivals hall for group coach transfer to hotel.

Afternoon: Briefing with the Norwegian Directorate of Education and Global EPLP welcome discussion. Location TBA. L/D on your own.

Saturday, October 19, 2024 – Oslo City Tour & Cultural Exhibits

Half-day private guided city walking tour including the Royal Castle, Parliament Building, National Opera, Nobel Peace Center, Munch Museum, and harbor area. B provided, L/D on your own.

Sunday, October 20, 2024 – Transfer from Oslo to Trondheim

All Day: Private scenic coach tour. Arrive Trondheim and hotel check-in. B/L provided, D on your own.

Monday, October 21, 2024 – Norwegian University of Science & Technology, (NTNU), Trondheim

All Day: 8:30AM: On campus briefings and discussions at NTNU. B/L provided, D on your own.

Tuesday, October 22, 2024 - Trondheim

Morning: 8:30AM: Transfer by coach for school visit and return.

Afternoon: Briefings at NTNU. B/L provided, D on your own.

Wednesday, October 23, 2024 - Trondheim

Morning: 8:30AM: Transfer by coach for early childhood care center visit and return.

Afternoon: Briefing or seminar at NTNU, with late afternoon guided walking tour of Trondheim, including the Baklandet neighborhood. B/L provided, D on your own.

Thursday, October 24, 2024 – Trondheim

Morning: 8:30AM: Transfer by coach for school visit and return.

Afternoon: Briefings at NTNU. B/L provided, D on your own.

Friday, October 25, 2024 – Trondheim

Morning: 8:30AM: Vocational training program visit and briefing.

Afternoon: Briefing or seminar at NTNU, followed by GEPLP field study synthesizing discussion. B/L provided, D on your own.

Saturday, October 26, 2024 - Return flight to U.S.A. Early morning group transfer via coach to Trondheim Værnes Airport for flight to Oslo International Airport (OSL) or other destination city for international flight home or for extended travel plan connections.



Friday, November 16, 2024. 10:00AM to 12:00 Noon

Debriefing the Norway Field Study. Post-trip reflections and closing thoughts. Coordinators and Senior Fellows.

Global EPLP Policy Analysis (Optional)

Completion of a Global Education Policy Analysis. Each Senior Fellow will have the opportunity to complete a written capstone policy analysis of an education policy initiative in Norway. Working individually, or in small (2-4 person) collaborative teams, Senior Fellows analyze an education policy initiative and identify any implications this challenge might have on education in the U.S. and/or the organization that sponsors the GEPLP experience. The focus of this policy brief would be identified prior to the October field experience. One or more researchable questions would be developed prior to our departure and would focus the data gathering process for the study. The post-tour November 16, debriefing will provide opportunities for fellows to share and discuss their findings and the likely implications they see for U.S. education. Details about the policy analysis will be provided during the August 23, on-line meeting.

Suggested Readings and Media:

Note: Articles and links will be provided to program participants as electronic documents for your educational use only. Additional readings may be assigned by our monthly Norwegian on-line guest experts.

About the Global EPLP Co-Coordinators

Bob Monson coordinates the Advanced Education Policy Leadership Program in New York. From 2000 to 2009, he was a senior lecturer and program coordinator in education leadership at Teachers College, Columbia University. From 2001 to 2022, he coordinated the Education Policy Fellowship Program in the Department of Education Policy & Social Analysis at Teachers College. In 1977, he was a postdoctoral fellow at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Across seven states he has served public school children in the capacities of teacher, high school assistant principal, high school principal, assistant superintendent, and four superintendent positions in Ohio, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and New York. In 2010 he was a visiting fellow in education at Oxford University. From 2011-2015 he was a consultant to the University of Cambridge (UK) International Education as well as a consultant in Bhutan, China, the U.A.E., Nicaragua, and India.

Dan Schultz is Senior Policy and Program Advisor for the Office of K-12 Outreach in the College of Education at Michigan State University. He serves as Coordinator Emeritus for the Michigan Education Policy Fellowship Program (MI EPFP), a program he co-led for more than 35 years. He has developed and led over 25 academic and policy-oriented study tours to China, India, Botswana, Bhutan, Germany, Switzerland, Iceland, New Zealand, and the U.K. His background includes executive leadership and policy roles in state government in Michigan, where he was Assistant State Superintendent and Director of Technology and Grants for the Michigan Department of Education. He holds academic degrees in economics and education administration. He is the recipient of the Michigan Reading Association's Advocacy Award, the MSU College of Education Alumni Association's Distinguished Alumni Award, the Institute for Educational Leadership's National Leadership Award, and the International Friendship Award from Southwest University in China.