



# OPTIMAL SOLUTIONS GROUP LLC

ENABLING DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

WELCOME

SPRING 2008

QUICK LINKS



As spring brings forth the long awaited cherry blossoms, Optimal is similarly producing the results of its multi-year studies and evaluations. Optimal continues to evolve as it successfully completes challenging studies, hires and develops subject matter experts and writes journal articles, books, and method guides.



We sincerely appreciate all of our clients and partners whom have worked with us to plant seeds, water, cross-pollinate and nurture our growth.

Mark D. Turner, Ph.D., President and CEO  
Tracye Turner, Vice President

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SPOTLIGHT

## HUD Publishes Optimal Report on Factory-Built Housing Construction

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing (PATH), as part of its mission to promote affordable housing options, funded a study conducted by Optimal to collect information about consumers' perceptions of four housing types: site-built, modular, manufactured, and panelized.

Optimal's report, *Factory-Built Construction and the*

*American Homebuyer: Perceptions and Opportunities*, identifies what barriers there are to more widespread adoption of these more affordable construction techniques and what education and marketing strategies could be used to overcome any recognized barriers. Read more about the report [here](#).

## **National Collegiate Study Published by Harvard Education**

Under a contract with Jobs for the Future (JFF), Optimal analyzed data from the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) to track the educational progress of eighth graders over 12 years. The results of the analysis were recently used in an article titled "Doing the Math: What It Means to Double the Number of Low-Income College Graduates" by Susan Goldberger of JFF. The article is a chapter in *Minding the Gap: Why Integrating High School with College Makes Sense and How to Do It*, edited by Nancy Hoffman et al. and published by Harvard Education Press.

The article identified leaks in the education pipeline that lead to lower rates of post-secondary degree attainment among low-income youth. Read more about this research [here](#).

## **Ingle Serves on Panel at AAAS Conference**

Experts and leaders in science, education, and social policy gathered in Boston on February 14-18 for the 2008 American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Annual Meeting. Optimal's [Robin Ingle](#) was asked to serve on a panel of speakers on "Federal Science and the Public Good", along with prominent scientists from EPA, FDA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Union of Concerned Scientists, and Nobel laureate physicist Leon Lederman. Ingle's research at Optimal includes the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System Graduation Rates Study, the Virginia Evaluation of the Community Alternatives to Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities Study, and the What Works Clearinghouse.

Read more about the AAAS Annual Meeting [here](#).

## **Fashola Joins ERIC Expert Panel**

Dr. Toks Fashola has been selected to join the Education Resource Information Center ([ERIC](#)) Content Experts Panel. The panel members advise the ERIC contractor (Computer Sciences Corporation) on aspects of acquiring subject-specific, education-related resources for inclusion in the ERIC database. Dr. Fashola's area of expertise is in counseling and student services, which is an area that also covers at-risk education, dropout prevention, career and vocational education, intervention services, and college attendance. Using the selection standards and criteria developed with the guidance of the Steering Committee, the panel experts recommend journal articles to be included in ERIC as well as sources and types of non-journal materials, conferences, and dissemination strategies.

### **Service Obligations Web site Launched**

In late February, the National Center on Service Obligations (NCSO) launched its informational web site. NCSO was established by Optimal to work in conjunction with the project's innovative online database, the Scholar Tracking System, to monitor thousands of special education teachers across the country for up to 13 years. The aim of NCSO is to help address the shortage of special education teachers nationwide. Optimal is developing a process that will systematically monitor these individuals service obligation fulfillment in a cost effective manner.

NCSO's Scholar Tracking System will be activated in September 2008. Click [here](#) to read more about the NCSO project.

### **Pilot Data Collection Effort of Moving High-Performing Teachers to Low-Performing Schools Underway**

The U.S. Department of Education has contracted Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR) and its subcontractors, The New Teacher Project (TNTP) and Optimal, to refine the design, implement, and rigorously evaluate an innovative demonstration program to induce high-performing teachers to transfer to low-performing schools to address the lack of evidence of the impacts of specific policy interventions on the effective teacher retention and recruitment initiatives.

Read more about the Moving High-Performing

Teachers to Low-Performing Schools research [here](#).

## OPTIMAL NEWS

### New Optimal Staff

Optimal has expanded its education and health policy research expertise with the addition of [Olatokunbo \(Toks\) Fashola](#), Ph.D., [Deborah Moreno](#), M.P.A, R.N., Ph.D., and [Kazuaki \(Kaz\) Uekawa](#), Ph.D. Dr. Fashola is a senior research fellow in the Education Research Center who currently serves as an ERIC Content Expert for the U.S. Department of Education. Dr. Moreno is a senior research associate in the Health Policy Research Center. And, Dr. Uekawa joined Optimal as a senior research associate at the beginning of the year.

Optimal enhanced its senior management with the addition of [Errol Julien](#), Controller. Mr. Julien is a seasoned professional with more than 25 years of accounting and contracts experience with both small and large federal contractors.

### NPR Visits Optimal

Mark Turner, President and CEO, was recently interviewed by [National Public Radio](#) on the challenges of starting and operating a successful small business. The date of the broadcast is not available at press time.