

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SREE Announces 2026 Early Career Award Winners: Erica Harbatkin and Taylor Odle

[September 21, 2026] — The Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness (SREE) is pleased to announce Taylor Odle and Erica Harbatkin as the recipients of the 2026 Early Career Award. This prestigious honor recognizes their exceptional contributions to the field of education research and their shared commitment to advancing evidence-based practice in education.

The SREE Early Career Award is given annually to recognize early-stage professionals who have demonstrated outstanding research achievements within seven years of earning their doctoral degrees. The award aims to highlight individuals whose innovative work has significantly impacted educational effectiveness, practice, and policy.

Erica Harbatkin's research uses econometric methods to uncover the causes and consequences of educational disparities and to isolate the causal impacts of policies designed to narrow those gaps. Widely published in top peer-reviewed outlets, she has secured more than \$230,000 as a Principal Investigator and over \$3 million as a co-PI from sources including the U.S. Department of Education, state departments of education in Michigan and Florida, and the American Education Research Association. Currently, Harbatkin is assistant professor of educational policy and evaluation at Florida State University and a faculty affiliate at the Education Policy Innovation Collaborative (EPIC) at Michigan State University, where she is leading up a quantitative team examining the state's Grow Your Own initiatives and previously led the quantitative team evaluating the state's school turnaround model. Her impactful research on teacher turnover and school interventions has been featured by blogs at the Brookings Institution and Fordham Institute. Since joining SREE as a doctoral student in 2015, she has actively supported the organization as the chair of the Organization of Schools and Systems section, a *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness* (JREE) editorial board member, and a frequent conference proposal reviewer and presenter.

One nominator shared that Harbatkin perfectly embodies the spirit of the award through her rigorous research, commitment to equity, and dedication to mentoring emerging scholars. Her groundbreaking work on researcher-developed measures was highlighted, noting its direct impact on how scholars communicate effect sizes to policymakers. It was added that Harbatkin is an exceptional mentor to graduate students and trusted beacon of guidance for colleagues.

Taylor Odle's research identifies structural barriers in higher education and evaluates scalable solutions to reduce racial and socioeconomic inequality. Widely published in top outlets like *Educational Researcher*, his work has secured over \$3 million in support. He has shaped policy in over a dozen states, and earned recognition as a 2026 RHSU Edu-Scholar. Currently, Odle serves as Principal Investigator on one of the nation's largest education experiments - a massive combined direct admissions and financial aid pilot in Tennessee. His legislative testimony proved instrumental in passing statewide free college in Minnesota. Odle has been active in the SREE community for several years, dating back to 2020 when he was a Summer Fellow. Additionally, he actively supports

the organization as a *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness* (JREE) editorial board member, a Summer Fellows Selection Committee member, and a frequent conference proposal reviewer, session chair, and presenter.

Nominators shared that Taylor is perfectly suited for this award, having already made major, rigorous contributions to education policy that directly improve student experiences. They have noted that he is an outstanding citizen and a deeply valued member of SREE and all are thrilled to see his impactful work recognized, and know this honor will continue to propel his career forward.

SREE looks forward to honoring Odle and Harbatkin at a dedicated awards ceremony during the upcoming SREE Annual Conference, held September 23–26 in Baltimore, MD. Beyond celebrating these outstanding achievements, the conference serves as a cornerstone for the educational research community—bringing colleagues together to connect, collaborate, and share insights. SREE is thrilled to welcome everyone as we celebrate both these individual successes and the collective work of our members.

About SREE

The Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness is a professional society dedicated to advancing research relevant to practice, from early childhood through post-secondary education. The Society strives to generate knowledge and facilitate applications in new contexts and across fields. It's over eight hundred members represent individuals from across the United States as well as the world. To learn more about the organization, visit www.sree.org.

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