Spotlight

NCLB Scanning Service—Title I Program Monitoring Information Published

This month, the Southeast Comprehensive Center's NCLB Scanning Service (http://secc.sedl.org/) features new information on U.S. Department of Education (ED) Title I Program Monitoring. The ED Web page on this topic discusses the purpose, rationale, and process used by the Student Achievement and Accountability (SASA) programs office to monitor four formula grant programs

- Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies
- Title I, Part B, Subpart 3: William F. Goodling Even Start Family Literacy Program
- Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Program for Children and Youth Who are Neglected, Delinquent or At-Risk of Dropping Out
- Title X, Part C: McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act of 2001

In addition, the department's Web page features reports for the past five monitoring cycles (including 2007–2008), monitoring indicators for 2008–2009, and a monitoring cycle report. The *2003–2006 Monitoring Cycle Report, (*http://www.ed.gov/ admins/ lead/account/monitoring/monitoringcyclerpt1008. pdf) discusses the monitoring process, monitoring results, and state summary data for the indicators. Major takeaways from the monitoring report include the following observations

- State compliance with the indicators was strongest in the area of accountability, with states meeting 73% of these indicators.

- States were weakest overall in compliance with the indicators of instructional support—parental involvement, schoolwide programs, and requirements for school improvement, corrective action, and restructuring.
- Sixteen states were in compliance with parental involvement requirements; 24 states were in compliance with requirements for schoolwide programs.
- States showed weak compliance with indicators in the fiduciary responsibilities area, which included services to private school children, comparability, and allocations, reallocation and carryover.

SASA monitoring is based on the states' obligation to provide guidance and support to local education agencies (LEAs), in accordance with the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). These requirements are framed by the four key principles of accountability, choice, parental involvement, and the use of scientifically based research on what is effective. The monitoring process consists of examination of how states have instituted policies, systems, and procedures to ensure LEA and school compliance with the statute and regulations. To determine the states' level of compliance with monitoring indicators for the grant programs, SASA teams conduct desk reviews, document reviews, and onsite monitoring visits.

To obtain additional information about Title I program monitoring, use this link: http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/ account/monitoring/index.html or to view a webcast on *Elementary & Secondary Education: Federal Monitoring Process for Title I, Part A,* use this link: http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/ account/monitoring/webcast.html

Highlights of State Work

Alabama

Response to Intervention Activities

On December 10, 2008, SECC staff met with the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) Response to Intervention (RtI) Team to continue to plan professional development and implementation of the RtI approach in the state's schools and districts. In addition, SECC staff is developing a summary

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document on progress-monitoring tools in mathematics, reading, and written expression, in response to an information request from the department.

LEA Support Roundtable Meeting

The LEA Support Roundtable and members of the School Improvement Team met with the Instructional Services Division Steering Committee in Montgomery on December 17. Participants discussed improving student achievement and determining strategies for meeting the needs of individual schools and school systems. The SECC was represented by Alabama state liaison Mary Lou Meadows.

Winter Retreat for LEA Support Roundtable

What is trust? Why does it matter? On December 18–19, the SECC hosted a winter retreat that enabled members of the LEA Support Roundtable and the Instructional Services Steering Committee to explore these key issues. During this retreat in Birmingham, participants learned how to apply consistent behaviors that build trust in the work setting. Also, presenter Sandy Lindsay, SECC South Carolina state liaison, led participants in developing individual personal action plans and a global plan for building and extending trust with constituencies of the ALSDE and the roundtable.
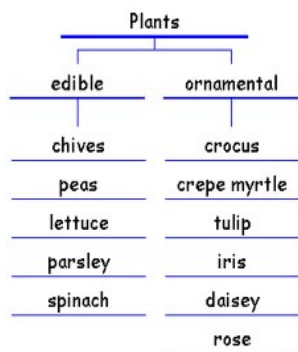
Georgia

Information Dissemination on School Finance

The SECC has responded to an information request from the Georgia Department of Education (GDE) about providing equity in educational funding nationally and within the Southeast region. In response to the request, SECC staff provided the department with links to a number of resources on the topic, including two reports from the Center on Reinventing Public Education, a Rand Corporation case study on school finance systems and their responsiveness to performance issues, and a report on school finance redesign research from the Consortium for Policy Research and Education.

Thinking Maps Process Implementation

Glenda Copeland, SECC Georgia state liaison, and Robin Jarvis, SECC program director, met with leadership at the GDE to plan follow-up strategies and support for the Summer 2009 implementation of Thinking Maps® in schools designated as needing improvement. Additional follow-up and support will be provided throughout the winter and spring for department staff assisting in the summer workshops. The Thinking Maps® process uses different types of maps—circle, bubble, tree, double bubble, flow, multi-flow, brace, and bridge—to create a common visual language for helping students to organize information and learn content in all disciplines. A Tree Map® (used for classifying items) is shown in the image.

Plants: edible — chives, peas, lettuce, parsley, spinach; ornamental — crocus, crepe myrtle, tulip, iris, daisey, rose

Technical Assistance for Parental Engagement Efforts

SECC program associates Sally Wade and Glenda Copeland met with Andrea Moore, GDE director, parent outreach, to identify specific technical assistance needed for statewide efforts to support parental engagement. The department's Parent Services Unit is responsible for efforts to promote and monitor supplemental educational services, parental involvement, and preschool and family literacy efforts.

Louisiana

Support for Education Department Divisions and Staff

The SECC continues to advance research and improve education in the state of Louisiana. Darlene Morgan Brown, SECC Louisiana state liaison, and other SECC staff are providing ongoing technical assistance to various divisions of the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE). During December, the SECC also provided professional development to the Louisiana distinguished educators (DEs). This select group of educators provides comprehensive onsite assistance to parents, teachers, and administrators, as well as assists school sites in strengthening their curricula, instruction, and assessment practices to affect positive educational change in low-achieving schools.

Concerns-Based Adoption Model Training

On December 1–2, SECC staff facilitated a professional development session on the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) for Louisiana's distinguished educators at the LDE's office. CBAM is a research-based conceptual framework that describes, explains, and predicts probable teacher concerns through the school change process. Betty Kraft (pictured in center),

who worked in the LDE Division of Professional Development and was trained by Shirley Hord, one of the original CBAM authors, led the session for 21 participants. SECC staff members Robin Jarvis, Darlene Morgan Brown, and Robyn Madison-Harris, also were in attendance.

The training objectives were to help participants gain an understanding of effective strategies for implementing change in schools, develop initial skills in designing and using innovation configurations, and develop initial skills in assessing stages of concern and suggesting appropriate interventions. Participants discussed the change process, the importance of creating a context for change, and strategies necessary to implement a new practice. The stages of concern that people often experience when implementing new practices were introduced, as well as Innovation Configuration, a tool designed to assist in creating an implementation map to guide new practices and processes. To continue to cultivate expertise in the CBAM model, Ed Tobia, SECC program associate, who also was trained by Hord, will conduct additional follow-up sessions with the DEs in February, April, and June 2009.

Mississippi

Office of Student Performance Retreats

Mississippi State Superintendent Hank Bounds has established an Office of Student Performance as part of a reorganization of the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE). The new office is composed of the Bureaus of School Improvement, Research and Statistics, Leadership and Professional Development, and Accreditation and Dropout Prevention. Interim Deputy Superintendent James Sardin requested that the SECC facilitate a retreat for bureau directors to assist the Office of Student Performance in developing strategies to achieve the Mississippi Board of Education's three goals for improving public education within the state. Sardin's intended outcomes for the retreat were 1) consideration of the mission and vision for the Office of Student Performance; 2) review of bureau functions and their assistance for low-performing districts and schools; 3) review of the audit and monitoring process for effectiveness, duplication, and paperwork burden; (4) development of a plan of action for the office; and 5) planning to engage all office staff in aligning and supporting the work. Bureau directors met to address Sardin's charge on October 10 and December 1, 2008, during retreats facilitated by the SECC.

Technical Assistance for Statewide System of Support

The Mississippi Department of Education is working with the SECC to describe the current status of the department's statewide system of support (SSOS) and how it provides services to schools and districts. MDE staff members have completed an inventory and submitted documents that provide an overview of the current SSOS system, participated in interviews, and reached consensus on factors that have had the greatest impact on school improvement. They also have recommended principals and superintendents to be interviewed for this process. In addition, SECC staff members have developed an SSOS self-assessment draft report that describes the MDE's current system.

On December 2, SECC staff convened the MDE Self-Assessment Team and a broader group of MDE personnel involved in the statewide system of support to review and amend the content of the SSOS self-assessment draft report. During the work session, the group revised the draft and assembled the final report. The SECC will continue to provide technical assistance to the MDE related to development of a plan to strengthen the department's SSOS. The plan will address the key components of implementation, progress monitoring, and evaluation.

South Carolina

Follow-up Activities for Statewide System of Support

A continuing joint venture between the SECC and the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) includes follow-up work on the development of a plan for a statewide system of support for low-performing schools. On November 17, Sandra Lindsay, SECC South Carolina state liaison, facilitated a follow-up planning session for State Superintendent Jim Rex and his senior staff to implement a strong, coherent, SSOS for all South Carolina schools. Lindsay conducted a second planning session in mid-December with ongoing facilitation scheduled for January 2009.

Professional Development for Staff in Corrective Action Status Schools

SCDE staff and representatives of schools in corrective action status participated in a successful professional development session on November 19–20. The focus of the session was SEDL's Professional Teaching and Learning Cycle (PTLC). SECC program associates Ed Tobia and Como Molina as well as SCDE staff members Kathy Mason and Marsha Johnson conducted the 2-day session in Columbia. Based on positive feedback from the session, a number of participants have requested support and follow-up for using the PTLC process in their school districts. The SCDE will provide this support and has asked the SECC to assist with coordinating a follow-up meeting to bring key personnel back together in Spring 2009 for refinement of the plan for implementation of PTLC in targeted school districts.

Efforts to Increase Parental Involvement

For the past 4 months, SECC staff members have been collaborating with department staff to develop and revise documents to assist the agency in supporting statewide and local school district efforts to enhance parental involvement. These documents contain definitions of meaningful engagement and capacity building for the SCDE, research-informed rubrics that allow the agency and districts to measure their efforts in parental involvement, and an evaluation tool for use in local school districts for self-assessment and feedback purposes. The documents were in the final stages of review and were scheduled for printing in December 2008.

Center on Instruction

One of five content centers established by the U.S. Department of Education, the Center on Instruction (COI) serves as a resource for the department's 16 regional comprehensive centers. In this role, COI's primary objective is to synthesize evidence-based research on instruction in reading, science, mathematics, special education, and English language learning and to translate this research knowledge into effective products that the comprehensive centers can offer to state and local policymakers and educators. COI also provides information on meeting the goals of NCLB, best practices in the specified subject areas, as well as opportunities for professional development, such as meetings, workshops, videoconferences, podcasts, and webcasts.

The COI Web site features several noteworthy resources that focus on closing the achievement gap and enhancing teaching and learning for all students

A Cultural, Linguistic, and Ecological Framework for Response to Intervention With English Language Learners

http://www.centeroninstruction.org/files/Framework_for_RTI.pdf

This practitioner brief from NCCREST explains how to implement RtI in a manner that will provide an equitable educational opportunity for English language learners. It states that knowledge of each child's particular life experiences as well as teacher-related and school-related issues must be considered when beginning implementation of RtI.

Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices [4–12]

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/practiceguides/#adlit_pg

This practice guide from the What Works Clearinghouse offers five evidence-based recommendations for educators to use to improve literacy levels among adolescents in upper elementary, middle, and high schools. The guide also discusses the quality and quantity of evidence that supports recommendations and provides a checklist for implementation.

Response to Intervention: Blueprints for Implementation– District Level

http://www.centeroninstruction.org/files/DISTRICT.pdf

The National Association of State Directors of Special Education Inc. has released a second document in its RtI Blueprint series: *Response to Intervention Blueprints for Implementation: District Level*. This publication outlines the components of a district-level strategy to implement RtI district-wide and provide ongoing support to individual sites.

To learn more about the latest resources and tools for improving instruction, visit the Center on Instruction's Web site at http://www.centeroninstruction.org/ or contact Angela Penfold, project director, RMC Research Corporation, at 800-258-0802.

Calendar of Events

Mississippi Department of Education Dropout Prevention Work Session
January 7, 2009

Robert E. Lee Building, 2nd floor, classroom A, Jackson, MS

In this follow-up technical assistance session, MDE dropout prevention coaches and community organizers will form teams to apply the 15 effective strategies for dropout prevention. Participants will identify strengths and weaknesses of the district dropout prevention plans and will increase their knowledge of ways to assist districts in refining and implementing their plans.

Contact: Sheril Smith
Phone: 601-359-5743
E-mail: srsmith@mde.k12.ms.us

MDE Critical Teacher Shortage Act Work Session
January 13, 2009

Jackson Marriott Hotel, Jackson, MS

MDE personnel will participate in a Mississippi Critical Teacher Shortage Act work session, facilitated by the SECC. Outcomes for the work session are as follows:

- Review/analyze the Mississippi Critical Teacher Shortage Act of 1998 (House Bill 609)
- Identify recommendations for potential revisions to the Mississippi Critical Teacher Shortage Act of 1998 (House Bill 609)
- Review the current MDE process for designating critical shortage areas
- Identify recommendations for potential revisions to the critical shortage act designation policy

Contact: Daphne Buckley
Phone: 601-359-3631
E-mail: dbuckley@mde.k12.ms.us

MDE Response to Intervention Work Session #6
February 3–4, 2009

Jackson Marriott, Jackson, MS

This activity is the sixth follow-up RtI work session to continue planning the collaborative technical assistance to be provided to the MDE in its statewide RtI implementation initiative. Participants in this event include the MDE, the Southeast Regional Resource Center (SERRC), the Southeast Equity Center, and the SECC.

Contact: Debbie Meibaum, SECC program associate
Phone: 601-605-2221
E-mail: debra.meibaum@sedl.org

Response to Intervention Regional Summit on Funding Models
February 25–26, 2009

Renaissance Atlanta Airport Concourse Hotel, Atlanta, GA

The SECC is hosting an RtI Regional Summit on Funding Models that is designed to build the capacity of state educational agencies (SEAs) to implement RtI using various funding methods. This regional meeting is designed for six-member state teams consisting of superintendents and directors who have programmatic and/or budgetary responsibilities. The SECC has invited participants from SEA staff within its region to attend the summit (participation is by invitation only).

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