

# Spotlight

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## Online Resources Update

The [Resources](#) page of the Southeast Comprehensive Center (SECC) Web site features a number of publications and other materials in topic areas such as curriculum and instruction, family and community engagement, high school reform, leadership, teacher quality, school improvement and accountability, and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Recent entries include

[Driven to Succeed: High-Performing, High-Poverty, Turnaround Middle Schools](#)

[English Language Learners: A Policy Brief](#)

[SECC Rapid Response: Transition Activities and Strategies for Middle Grades](#)

To access additional information on resources, services, and events, visit <http://secc.sedl.org/>

## Highlights of State Work

### Alabama

#### Regional Support Coordinators Meeting

The monthly Regional Support Coordinators meeting was held November 20, 2009, at the Alabama State Department building. The group discussed reports from individual members on the needs assessment component, proposal updates, the Governor's Commission Web site, tiered support, and making connections between specific department work and Response to Instruction across the support system.

As a member of the coordinators group, Mary Lou Meadows, EdD, SECC Alabama state liaison, presented an overview of SECC's

work that is planned with various Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) work sections for 2009–2010.

#### Evaluation of School Support Team Efforts

SECC staff Meadows and Erin McCann, PhD, program associate, met with ALSDE staff Ann Allison, Cheryl Sparks, Debbie Webster, and Catherliene Williamson on November 2–3 to begin the process of designing an evaluation for the school support team efforts. The first step was to describe the program and generate expected outcomes for each of the program activities. Next, SECC staff will chart the activities and expected outcomes and generate a logic model of the program.

### Georgia

#### Thinking Maps® Training

On November 2–3, 2009, 22 Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) staff members participated in the first 2 days of training in Thinking Maps strategies for schools in needs improvement status. The final day of the workshop was on December 14. Participants included state directors who are providing support for schools implementing Thinking Maps.

#### Georgia Literacy Plan

SECC program associate Kathleen Theodore, MA, assisted GaDOE staff Mary Stout and Kim Jeffcoat in facilitating the Georgia Literacy Panel meeting on November 17. The panel, composed of educators from across the state, examined the recommendations of the Georgia K–12 Literacy Plan, offered suggestions on how the recommendations can be implemented, and determined which recommendations will require policy changes. Next steps include completing a final edit of the plan and initiating the process of review by Superintendent Kathy Cox and her executive cabinet.

#### Support for Thinking Maps® Implementation

Glenda Copeland, MA, SECC Georgia state liaison, visited state directors at Baker Middle School and Eddy Middle School in Columbus, Georgia, on November 16 and 18. SECC staff is

working with state directors at 12 schools implementing Thinking Maps (TM) to improve student learning and success. Among the strategies for which SECC is providing support are walk-throughs, discussions with staff about their implementation, data analysis, and feedback on the maps displayed in classrooms.

During the site visits, SECC program associate Sally Wade, EdD, met with GaDOE state director Anne Hobby at Stewart High School and Judith Dorris at Washington Middle School regarding Thinking Maps implementation. The group is using data from awareness walks and other process data to monitor implementation and guide technical assistance. Based on observations of Thinking Maps use in the classrooms, the group also identified and discussed follow-up support for both state directors.

## Louisiana

### Statewide System of Support Initiative

Darlene Morgan Brown, PhD, SECC Louisiana state liaison, participated in the monthly Pacesetter States Academy conference call between the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) and Nancy Protheroe, Center on Innovation and Improvement (CII) liaison, on December 2, 2009. Pacesetter state team members shared the preliminary results of the self-assessment inventory and state-, district-, and school-level interviews as well as the profile view of the statewide system of support (SSOS), as assessed by the SSOS evaluation rubric with Protheroe. In addition, the team developed a plan of action to address next steps and updated the conference call schedule for January through June 2010.

### Rtl Task Force

On December 3, Ada Muoneke, PhD, SECC program associate, attended the second Response to Intervention (Rtl) Task Force meeting at LDE. The purpose of the meeting was to work on Louisiana's plan for statewide implementation of Rtl. The task force reviewed and revised the draft Rtl implementation plan developed on October 7. The team identified several priorities—a needs assessment, a professional development plan, an Rtl guidance and implementation manual, and an evaluation and accountability plan—as the focus for the implementation plan. They also established specific activities for each priority area and set timelines for statewide scale-up.

The task force will meet again in January and March 2010 to continue its work. During the next meeting, the group will focus on writing the state's Rtl guidance document and designing a sample template for districts' Rtl plans.

## Mississippi

### Online Professional Development

On November 5 and November 30, 2009, Debra Meibaum, MAT, SECC Mississippi state liaison, facilitated follow-up work sessions with Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) staff members regarding online professional development. The revised format of the MDE rubric *Expectations for Online Instructors with Mississippi Virtual Public Schools (MVPS)* was reviewed and additional revisions were recommended. The revised document will be submitted to MDE's legal department for its review. Also, the group initiated work on Phase 2 of this project, the peer coaching component.

### Math/Science Partnership Grant Reviews

On November 23–24, SECC program associates Concepcion Molina, EdD, Camille Chapman, MEd, and Mary Lou Meadows served on MDE's evaluation committee to review written proposals for the Math and Science Partnerships (MSP) Program Grant. The purpose of the MSP grant is to increase student academic achievement and classroom teachers' content knowledge and teaching skills. The group reviewed the proposals for plan efficacy, including alignment with national and state standards, an evaluation plan with measurable objectives that describe student progress, demonstration of research-based instructional strategies, and budget and cost effectiveness.

### MDE/PIRC Collaboration

SECC program associate Chris Ferguson, PhD, and Mississippi state liaison Meibaum, met with the parent involvement planning team from MDE and with staff from the Mississippi State Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC) on November 2 to follow up on the August 5 meeting. Ferguson and Meibaum facilitated a discussion that allowed participants to review materials that will support parental involvement efforts at the state, district, and school levels. These resources included a parent coordinator/parent aide database for collecting contact information for district-level staff leading parental involvement efforts, a tool for promoting an effective family/parent center, and methods for the Mississippi PIRC to use its outreach efforts to support MDE's work to foster increased parental involvement. Ferguson also facilitated a follow-up conference call on November 23.

### Regional Math Institute Follow-Up Meeting

On November 6, SECC program associates Chapman and Meibaum met with five members of the Mississippi team who attended SECC's National Math Panel Report (NMPPR) institute in July. During the post-institute luncheon and follow-up meeting, team members reviewed MDE's plan from the institute and identified future actions needed to increase awareness of the

NMPR recommendations for support in the state department's work.

In December, Chapman and a team member from MDE held a follow-up meeting to develop a summary document for presentation at the Statewide System of Support and Response to Intervention Coordinating Councils.

## South Carolina

### Turnaround Specialists

The Office of Federal and State Accountability at the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) is exploring the option of hiring turnaround specialists to work in several of the state's lowest performing schools. Steve Abbott, director of the Title I office, requested assistance from SECC in developing a plan to get this initiative off the ground. The major tasks included in the request for assistance are defining what a turnaround specialist is, finding people available to serve in that capacity, and developing a professional development regimen to ensure fidelity in implementing the plan.

Three SECC program associates Camille Chapman, Dale Lewis, PhD, and Robyn Madison-Harris, EdD, will work with SCDE education associates Marsha Johnson and Kathy Mason to complete this project. Planning began in December 2009 and will continue into January 2010.

### Parental Involvement Project

The South Carolina Department of Education in conjunction with SECC and the South Carolina Parent Information and Resource Centers (SC-PIRC) co-sponsored the third annual collaboration meeting for organizations in the state that are involved in parental engagement efforts. At the meeting, participants provided feedback on several tools developed over the past 2 years but specifically focused on a rubric intended to measure meaningful parental involvement. After reviewing the feedback, Karen Williams, SCDE Title I parent involvement coordinator, requested additional assistance to expand the parental engagement work that has already begun.

In brief, SCDE staff members seek assistance in developing a resource document that would help users to effectively apply the rubric, stressing shared accountability for student success among educators, students, families, and other stakeholders. The product will likely be a booklet of 30–40 pages that will include explanations of shared accountability, meaningful engagement, and how to apply the rubric. The resource will be a valuable implementation tool for educators and non-educators alike. Chris Ferguson, SECC program associate, will work with Williams and other SCDE associates to complete this project over the next several months.

## Calendar of Events

### Tiered Interventions and Evidence-Based Strategies for Improving Student Outcomes in High School

February 24–25, 2010  
 Charleston Place Hotel  
 Charleston, SC

The purpose of this [Response to Intervention Summit](#) is to build the capacity of state education agencies (SEAs) to support the implementation of tiered interventions and evidence-based strategies in high schools to improve outcomes for students.

During the RtI summit, SEA staff will explore key RtI topics, develop potential strategies and next steps for supporting the implementation of tiered interventions, and increase networking opportunities to support implementation.

Participation in this event is by invitation only.

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<b>Southeast Comprehensive Center Spotlight</b> <i>A publication of SEDL's Southeast Comprehensive Center</i>	
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The Southeast Comprehensive Center (SECC) is one of 16 regional centers established by the U.S. Department of Education. The primary goal of the regional centers is to build the capacity of the state education agencies and statewide systems of support to implement NCLB. Links to the other regional centers, the content centers, and the U.S. Department of Education may be found on the SECC Web site ( <a href="http://secc.sedl.org">secc.sedl.org</a> ).	
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