

Spotlight

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NCLB Scanning Service Update

The Southeast Comprehensive Center's NCLB Scanning Service (<http://secc.sedl.org/>) currently features U.S. Department of Education (ED) guidance on topics related to requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB).

Public School Choice Non-Regulatory Guidance

January 14, 2009

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/schoolchoiceguid.pdf>

This guidance updates the Public School Choice Non-Regulatory Guidance released by ED on February 6, 2004. It includes new and modified questions that address issues related to the October 29, 2008, Title I regulations as well as other major policy decisions that the department has made regarding the public school choice provisions since their initiation.

Supplemental Educational Services (SES) Non-Regulatory Guidance

January 14, 2009

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/suppsvcsguid.pdf>

This guidance updates and expands on the SES Guidance released by ED on June 13, 2005. It includes a number of questions that address issues related to the October 2008 Title I regulations as well as other major policy guidance the department has issued since 2005.

Implementing Response to Intervention (RtI) Using Title I, Title III, and Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS) Funds: Key Issues for Decision Makers

January 09, 2009

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/08-0398rti.pdf>

This guidance addresses how funds under Title I and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and CEIS funds under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act may be used to support RtI in public schools. It also discusses the RtI framework and major factors for consideration before using the above funds to support implementation of the RtI process, such as the type of school, student eligibility, and supplement not supplant funding requirements.

Highlights of State Work

Alabama

Response to Intervention Activities

On January 16, 2009, Southeast Comprehensive Center (SECC) staff met with Dr. Tommy Bice and Christine Spear from the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) to discuss RtI activities. An overview of the SECC work with the RtI team from February to December 2008 was presented. Ada Muoneke, SECC program associate, will continue to work with the ALSDE team to plan and coordinate RtI assistance. Follow-up planning sessions are scheduled for March 9 and March 25.

LEA Support Roundtable Meeting

The LEA Support Roundtable held its monthly meeting in Montgomery on January 23. Roundtable members 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, who serves as a Roundtable member.

Georgia

Thinking Maps Implementation and Evaluation

On January 14, 2009, SECC Georgia state liaison Glenda Copeland met with Georgia Department of Education (GDE) School Improvement leadership to outline SECC participation in the implementation of the Thinking Maps® process. In June, this process will be rolled out in schools designated in needs improvement status 7–9. In addition to guiding development

of an evaluation plan for the implementation, SECC program staff will participate in the planning and delivery of content applications for the summer Thinking Maps® training sessions.

Data Team Workshop

Copeland attended a Data Team workshop with members of the GDE's School Improvement Division on February 18. This training is part of the overall support that is provided to schools, especially those that have been identified as needing improvement.

Roundtable Session for Parent Engagement Summit

Sally Wade, SECC program associate, collaborated with representatives of the GDE in planning a roundtable session for the 1-day It Takes a Parent: Secondary Level Parent Engagement Summit that was scheduled for February 25. Wade also provided information concerning resources that would be disseminated at the summit. According to the GDE, the summit was planned to enhance the skills and knowledge base of parents and educators as well as to promote networking among individuals and programs involved in secondary education throughout the state.

Participation in Rtl Funding Summit

The GDE sent six participants, representing special education (SPED); curriculum, instruction, and assessment; Rtl; school improvement; federal programs; and fiscal management to the SECC Rtl Funding Summit in Atlanta on February 25–26.

Georgia Literacy Task Force

In January and February 2009, SECC program associates Ramona Chauvin and Kathleen Theodore met with the Georgia Literacy Task Force K–12 Literacy Component Subgroup (shown in picture), which includes GDE staff from Early Literacy, English Language Learners/English as a Second Language, SPED, and Career Counseling departments; the head librarian from a public library in Decatur; an assistant superintendent from a local education association; and three classroom teachers. The subgroup focused on completing the following (1) reviewing the recommendations of the task force, (2) reviewing literacy plans from other states, (3) narrowing the recommendations to three or four, and (4) generating a guiding structure or list of focal ideas for the remaining subgroups and literacy plan work.



On January 29 and 30, SECC staff met with Mary Stout, Kimberly Jeffcoat, and Pam Smith of the GDE to continue the writing process and to ensure that the Georgia standards were included in the documentation. Content-area representatives from the department, who had reviewed the standards, submitted literacy skills to be emphasized. Also, participants discussed the K–12 Literacy Component Subgroup's work at a meeting held on February 12 at the department.

Louisiana

Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) Training

On December 1–2, 2008, the SECC facilitated a professional learning opportunity for the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) for more than 20 of its distinguished educators from across the state. CBAM, a research-based framework and set of tools for understanding and managing change in schools, was introduced to the participants by facilitator Betty Kraft. On February 5, 2009, Ed Tobia, SECC program associate, facilitated the second CBAM session. Additional training sessions are scheduled to occur in April and June 2009.

Parental Involvement Technical Assistance Meeting

On January 15, 2009, Darlene Morgan Brown, SECC Louisiana state liaison, and Sally Wade, SECC program associate, met with representatives of the LDE Family Service Section for Title I, Part A. The purpose of the meeting was to review previously gathered evidence and to identify additional sources of evidence as per the federal monitoring checklist, in preparation for the site visit scheduled for February 2009. Technical assistance will continue on March 17 when LDE parental involvement staff and SECC staff Morgan Brown, Wade, and Chris Ferguson participate in a strategic planning meeting.

School Improvement Plan Revision Meeting

On January 23, the LDE Division of Educational Assistance and Improvement hosted more than 80 participants from across the state, representing districts, regional service centers, and universities, at a school improvement plan revision meeting in Baton Rouge. Tobia (pictured in center) served as facilitator, and SECC program associates Morgan Brown and Robyn Madison-Harris also were in attendance. This collaborative effort yielded the formation of more than seven subcommittees charged with developing recommendations



for edits to various sections of the plan. Each subcommittee is required to meet twice a month, and the next “whole group” meeting is scheduled for March 2009. In preparation for this professional development opportunity, SECC and LDE staff conducted a planning meeting on February 17 via teleconference.

Mississippi

Statewide System of Support Meeting

On January 9, 2009, SECC staff facilitated a meeting with Dr. Kris Kaase, Dr. Laura Jones, James Sardin, Martez Hill, and Dr. Daphne Buckley, who are members of the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) self-assessment team. SECC staff provided the self-assessment team with technical assistance in developing a mission statement for the department’s statewide system of support. The team also selected areas of priority in their work to improve the system.

Office of Healthy Schools Professional Development

On January 12, the MDE Office of Healthy Schools staff participated in a professional development activity that was led by SECC program associate Camille Chapman and Mississippi state liaison Debra Meibaum. The focus of the 1-day planning session was identifying linkages between the office’s work and the Mississippi Board of Education’s vision and mission statements, three goals, and five strategies. Participants identified opportunities for coordination of services such as RtI, High School Redesign, and other MDE programs with the Office of Healthy Schools’ initiatives. Additionally, participants developed a plan of work in support of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Eight Components of a Coordinated School Health Program.

RtI Work Sessions and Meetings

On January 14, MDE personnel participated in an RtI Speakers Bureau planning work session facilitated by SECC staff. The purpose of the speakers bureau is to carry a consistent message about RtI across the state, thereby increasing public awareness of key points of the RtI process. Planning work session participants drafted a 90-minute RtI public awareness presentation, including a PowerPoint presentation and handouts. Participants also were asked to identify adaptations for increasing and decreasing the RtI presentation time frame to meet the needs of targeted groups. A follow-up work session was scheduled for April 7. SECC staff also participated in the RtI Coordinating Council meeting on January 6.

Critical Teacher Shortage Act Work Session

MDE’s Office of Quality Professionals and Special Schools

personnel participated in a Mississippi Critical Teacher Shortage Act work session, facilitated by SECC staff on January 14. Participants reviewed the Mississippi Critical Teacher Shortage Act of 1998 (House Bill 609) and identified recommendations for potential revisions. Participants explored the possibility of a follow-up work session to review the current MDE process for designating critical shortage areas and identify recommendations for potential revisions to the critical shortage act designation policy.

Development of Alternative Education Program

On January 27, staff from the MDE’s Office of Compulsory School Attendance Enforcement, Alternative Education/GED and Counseling collaborated with SECC staff members on an alternative education technical assistance request. Participants discussed components of an effective alternative education program and reviewed materials for upcoming professional development activities. Based on the day’s discussions, the MDE will develop three presentations of varying lengths of time, which address the various components of an effective alternative education program. The three presentations will be e-mailed to the participants for their review and feedback. A follow-up conference call is scheduled for March 12.

Technical Assistance With Dropout Prevention Efforts

SECC staff continued to provide technical assistance to the MDE’s Office of Dropout Prevention in reviewing its dropout prevention plans, identifying effective dropout prevention strategies, and developing training sessions for dropout prevention staff.

South Carolina

Standards Support System Curriculum Project

In February 2009, SECC staff worked with the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) on an important curriculum project that has the potential to improve instruction in classrooms across the state. The SCDE has invested significant effort in the development of S³, the Standards Support System, which includes multiple tools and resources to assist teachers in effectively using the South Carolina Academic Standards. Dr. Valerie Harrison, deputy superintendent for the Division of Standards and Learning, and Robin Rivers, interim director for the Office of Academic Standards, are the lead staff at the SCDE who requested SECC assistance with this project.

S³ is based on Dr. Robert J. Marzano’s premise that the written, taught, and tested curriculum must be aligned.¹ The S³ design provides for coordination of development work, dissemination of quality support documents, and professional development that

¹Schmoker, M., & Marzano, R. J. (1999, March). Realizing the promise of standards-based education. *Educational Leadership*, 56 (6).

supports the implementation of the standards in every classroom or instructional setting. Components of S³ include academic standards, support documents, curriculum resources, assessment resources, professional development opportunities, and content updates.

On February 6, a team of content experts from the SECC conducted an on-site review of S³. Four SECC staff members were asked to serve as team members. Concepcion Molina and Camille Chapman reviewed the mathematics components, Glenda Copeland provided expertise in social studies, and Ramona Chauvin focused on English/language arts. A science expert will join the project at a later stage of the review. SCDE and SECC staff members jointly developed an agenda and plan of action for the day.

National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality

Since 2005, the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (TQ Center) has been at the forefront of helping to improve teacher quality for high-poverty, low-performing, hard-to-staff schools. Through its Web site, the TQ Center offers a number of resources that focus on key education issues, such as teacher quality and student achievement, research-based strategies for improving instruction, and evidence-based practices for improving teacher preparation.

Webcast on Use of Innovation Configurations

In a joint effort with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education, the TQ Center hosted a webcast on using innovation configurations to improve teacher preparation in critical areas on January 16, 2009. A recording of the webcast is available at http://www.tqsource.org/webcasts/innovationConfigurations_CriticalAreas/webcast/

Presentations used during the webcast may be viewed at http://www.tqsource.org/webcasts/innovationConfigurations_CriticalAreas/pptpresentations.php

Teacher Quality and Student Achievement: Making the Most of Recent Research

This research brief discusses the associations between teacher quality and student achievement and identifies several teacher quality variables—specific teacher qualifications, characteristics, and classroom practices, among others—that are strong and consistent predictors of student achievement. A PDF of the research brief is available at <http://www.tqsource.org/publications/March2008Brief.pdf>

For more information about the TQ Center, visit <http://www.tqsource.org/> or call 877-322-8700.

Calendar of Events

Alabama Monthly LEA Support Roundtable Meetings March 20–July 19, 2009

Gordon Persons Building, Montgomery, AL

The LEA Support Roundtable is composed of representatives from each section within the Alabama Instructional Services Division and other participants including the SECC Alabama state liaison; the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro; Alabama Reading Initiative; Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative; and the ALSDE's RtI Team. Monthly meetings are scheduled on March 20, April 17, May 22, June 19, and July 17.

Contact: Mary Lou Meadows, SECC program associate

Phone: 256-272-8072

E-mail: marylou.meadows@sedl.org

Georgia Department of Education Thinking Maps® Training for Trainers

March 2–4, 2009

Wyndham Peachtree Hotel, Peachtree City, GA

Georgia Department of Education (GDE) staff members will learn how to use the Thinking Maps® process and develop the knowledge and skills needed to train others in the use of this process.

GDE Thinking Maps® Training for Leaders

March 5–6, 2009

Georgia Department of Education, Atlanta, GA

Principals from participating schools that are in needs improvement status and support personnel will participate in training in the use of this process to benefit their schools and leadership staff.

GDE Content Specialist Training in Thinking Maps®

March 23–24, 2009

Wyndham Peachtree Hotel, Peachtree City, GA

GDE staff will examine the use of this process in specific content areas. Also, content and special education specialists will work in teams with SECC staff to plan the upcoming content training for schools that are in needs improvement status.

Contact: Glenda Copeland, SECC program associate

Phone: 770-432-7675

E-mail: glenda.copeland@sedl.org

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Wesley A. Hoover, PhD, SEDL President and CEO
Robin Jarvis, PhD, SECC Program Director
Chris Times, MBA, SECC Communications Associate
and Publication Editor

Alabama State Liaison: Lou Meadows (lou.meadows@sedl.org)
Georgia State Liaison: Glenda Copeland (glenda.copeland@sedl.org)
Louisiana State Liaison: Darlene Brown (darlene.brown@sedl.org)
Mississippi State Liaison: Debra Meibaum (debra.meibaum@sedl.org)
South Carolina State Liaison: Sandra Lindsay (slindsay@mailbox.sc.edu)

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 (secc.sedl.org).

SEDL
4700 Mueller Blvd., Austin, TX 78723, 800-476-6861, www.sedl.org

SOUTHEAST COMPREHENSIVE CENTER at SEDL
3501 N. Causeway Blvd., Suite 700, Metairie, LA 70002, 800-644-8671, secc.sedl.org

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