

Spotlight

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ARRA Funds Education Reforms

On March 7, 2009, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced that \$44 billion in stimulus funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) would be made available to states within 35–45 days. To receive these one-time funds, states must agree to ARRA requirements that include several key education reforms: (a) raising standards through college- and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments that are valid and reliable for all students; (b) increasing transparency through implementation of effective data systems to track student progress over time; (c) improving teacher effectiveness and ensuring an equitable supply and distribution of qualified teachers; and (d) supporting effective intervention strategies for the lowest-performing schools.

For over 40 years, SEDL’s work has focused on improving teaching and learning. In keeping with this mission, SEDL is available to offer guidance on ARRA funding opportunities and regulations as well as to provide high-quality research-based technical assistance, professional development, and learning resources. The Southeast Comprehensive Center (SECC) at SEDL offers services that are designed to help states build capacity to improve leadership, instruction, and learning in their school districts and schools. To learn more about decoding the ARRA, contact Robin Jarvis, SECC program manager, or an SECC state liaison.

Summit on Rtl Funding Models

On February 25–26, 2009, the SECC held its Response to Intervention (Rtl) Regional Summit on Funding Models in Atlanta, Georgia. Over 60 state education agency (SEA) staff and other stakeholders from Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi,

Louisiana, South Carolina, and Texas explored funding issues and developed state-specific action plans. Debra Meibaum, SECC Mississippi state liaison (on left), is pictured working with the Mississippi delegation, representing the areas of instructional programs, school improvement, curriculum and instruction, financial management, and special education. Presenters included experts from the National Center on Response to Intervention, the U.S. Department of Education (ED), and several states that have implemented Rtl funding models (Iowa, Oregon, and Pennsylvania). Additional information on state participation in the summit is provided below.



Rapid Response Service Enhanced

The SECC has streamlined its Rapid Response Service to provide easy access to Rapid Responses, summary documents of evidence-based information on crucial education topics. From this newly launched Web page, SEA staff can access the request form and submit queries electronically. Also, SEA staff and other visitors to the site can view a select list of Rapid Responses that have been completed to address queries from states served by the SECC. Topics include teacher quality, school improvement, curriculum and instruction, as well as accountability and assessment. The completion timeframe for each Rapid Response is based on the requester’s requirements and the scope and complexity of the query. For more information on this service, refer to the Web page or contact an SECC state liaison.



Highlights of State Work

Alabama

Rtl Planning Meetings and Information Dissemination

SECC staff are participating in a series of meetings to plan an Rtl Training Session for the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE). The session will be held April 17, 2009, in Montgomery. SECC program associates Ada Muoneke and Dale Lewis will serve as presenters at the session along with nationally recognized Rtl consultant Dr. Amanda VanDerHeyden. In addition, SECC staff have completed a Rapid Response for the ALSDE on Rtl progress-monitoring resources in mathematics, reading, and written expression for grades K–12.

Roundtable Meeting and Professional Development

On February 20, members of the LEA Support Roundtable met to discuss improving student achievement and determining strategies for meeting the needs of individual schools and school systems in Alabama. Also, Sandra Lindsay, SECC South Carolina state liaison, is continuing to work with selected roundtable members on their facilitation skills.

Videoconference on Web-Based SES Information

On February 9, staff members from Alabama's Supplemental Education Services (SES) group—Cyndi Townley, Jean Davis, Pam Cloud, and Keith George—participated in a videoconference with SECC staff members Chris Ferguson; Sally Wade; Magda Acuña; and Mary Lou Meadows, SECC Alabama state liaison. Attendees explored methods for providing parents with additional information about their rights, options, and Title I provisions related to parental involvement (particularly SES), through the department's Web site. In addition, SECC staff provided an overview of web design formats, techniques, and best practices for disseminating SES information to parents, based on the staff's review of 50 department of education Web sites from across the nation.

Georgia

Work Sessions for Statewide Literacy Plan

During February and March 2009, SECC program associates Ramona Chauvin and Kathleen Theodore provided technical assistance to the Georgia Department of Education (GDE) for development of its literacy plan for K–12. During multiple work sessions with the Georgia Literacy Task Force, subgroups reviewed research on key topics; developed documents; reviewed policies and procedures; and discussed frameworks and models for intervention, assessment, and professional learning. On April 6–8, the professional learning component subgroup plans to meet to continue writing and editing tasks.

Thinking Maps® Implementation and Evaluation

On March 2–4, consultant Chris Yeager provided Thinking Maps (TM) training for 23 GDE staff members, 6 individuals from Georgia's Leadership Institute for School Improvement, and 5 SECC staff in Peachtree City. Participants who have completed the training

will provide support for the implementation of Thinking Maps in Georgia schools that have been identified as in needs improvement status during the 2009–2010 school year. In late March, GDE and SECC staff that will provide TM training in content areas for needs improvement school staff met again in Peachtree City with the TM trainers to complete the design for these sessions. The workshops for educators and leaders will be held in five locations around the state from June 15–25.



Louisiana

CBAM Training for Distinguished Educator Program

A series of four professional development sessions on the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) are scheduled for the distinguished educators of Louisiana. The first two sessions were conducted in December 2008 and February 2009. In the sessions, educators are gaining invaluable experience in developing innovation configuration maps specific to their needs. SECC program associate Ed Tobia will facilitate the next session, on April 6–7 in Baton Rouge, during which participants will examine the change process and alignment strategies.

Federal Monitoring Visit in Louisiana

On February 9–13, the ED conducted monitoring of federal programs in Louisiana. The Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) received great reviews on its statewide system of support efforts, homeless program, accountability and assessment process, and eGrant system.

Rtl Summit and Meeting on Statewide Plan

A five-member team from the LDE participated in the SECC regional summit on Rtl funding models in February. During the summit, Susan Batson, Bernell Cook, Dr. Mary Louise Jones, Evelyn Johnson, and Dr. Kerry Laster were introduced to laws that govern the use of various funding sources when implementing a statewide Rtl plan. On March 3, the LDE held a follow-up meeting to identify additional action steps needed to promote the development of its Rtl plan.

School Improvement Plan Revision Committee Meeting

On March 12, a meeting was held in Alexandria with the leaders of the seven subcommittees that were formed during the initial school improvement revision meeting. SECC program associates Darlene Brown and Robyn Madison-Harris facilitated the meeting during which team leaders reviewed the required elements in a Title I needs assessment process, identified successes and barriers of the work, and determined additional support and resources needed to influence progress. Committee members also met on March 17 in Baton Rouge to provide updates of their work; identify implications of recommendations as they relate to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), state law, and best practices; and to determine next steps. SECC program associate Tobia facilitated the whole group school improvement revision committee meeting.

Assistance with Addressing Findings Related to ELLs

Several programs within the LDE that share responsibility for students who are identified as English language learners (ELLs) with limited English proficiency are working to address findings from the ED's February 2008 on-site monitoring visit. The LDE has made significant progress in correcting Title III findings and has asked the SECC to provide additional assistance with current efforts and long-term planning. On March 20, SECC staff members—Brown, Chauvin, and Gail Del Greco—will meet with LDE staff representing the Migrant, Title III, and Literacy and Numeracy divisions.

Professional Development for Mathematics Teachers

The LDE is exploring the possibility of creating professional development modules for 4th-grade mathematics teachers. On March 26, SECC program associate Brown met with Carolyn Sessions, standards and curriculum projects coordinator; Teri Roberts, Numeracy Division; and Jean May-Brett, Math Science Partnership Program coordinator, to discuss technical assistance needs.

Mississippi

Technical Assistance for Dropout Prevention Efforts

In March 2009, SECC staff continued to provide technical assistance to the Office of Dropout Prevention at the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE). SECC program associate Erin McCann worked with department staff to initiate evaluation of the state's dropout prevention program, which included assistance with MDE surveys to local dropout prevention coordinators.

Videoconference on Mississippi Coaching Academy

On February 23, SECC staff Debra Meibaum, Ed Tobia, and Camille Chapman participated in a videoconference with Paula Means, Katrina Merriwether, and Bill Welch from the MDE. In addition, Sara Maghan and Peggy Williams, consultants to the MDE, joined the conversation via teleconference. The team planned follow-up training sessions for participants in the Mississippi Coaching Academy, instructional coaches working in schools, and MDE consultants supporting the coaching program in the field. Upcoming meetings will focus on refinement of the coaching academy for the 2009–2010 school year.

Statewide System of Support Planning Committee

The MDE convened its statewide system of support (SSOS) planning committee on February 13. During the meeting, Dr. Hank Bounds, state superintendent, addressed the group regarding the importance of collaboratively working towards strengthening the SSOS. Dr. Kris Kaase, deputy superintendent, instructional programs and services, summarized the process the team used to identify priorities and goals. Also, SECC staff facilitated the group's ranking of selected priorities and goals for the system. Upon completion, the group worked on action plans using the Rtl planning model. The planning committee will reconvene in May to continue work on the action plans.

Social Studies Framework Review

On February 12–13, Vicki Dimock, program director of the Texas Comprehensive Center and the SECC, facilitated the K–5 committee at the MDE's Social Studies K–8 Framework and Mississippi Studies Revision Meeting. The goals are to

1. use resources such as the national standards for social studies and National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) to develop the framework draft;
2. review all draft competencies and objectives for K–8;
3. draft vertical alignment for each strand (K–8 only) with increased rigor; and
4. ensure that competencies and objectives are clear and measurable.

Additional work is planned for revising the social studies framework for Mississippi's high school courses.

Rtl Work Session and Coordinating Council Meeting

On February 3–4, SECC staff members Jarvis, Meibaum, Muoneke, and SECC consultant Michael Davis participated in the MDE Rtl work session #6. This work session continued the collaborative technical assistance provided for the statewide Rtl implementation initiative. Participants included the MDE, the Southeast Regional Resource Center, and the SECC. During the work session, participants reported on implementation efforts for November 2008–January 2009. This included activities undertaken, measurable results to date, difficulties encountered,

modifications made, and recommended steps. In addition, participants developed implementation plans and a calendar for new and continuing actions for February–April 2009. Meibaum also participated in the Rtl Coordinating Council meeting on February 17.

Rtl Funding Subcommittee Meeting

On February 4, SECC staff Jarvis, Muoneke, and Meibaum met with the Rtl funding subcommittee for its second meeting to discuss the implementation plan for developing an Rtl funding guide. Subcommittee members representing various program offices shared their findings regarding allowable uses of funds under federal and state funding regulations for their respective offices. To continue its work, the funding subcommittee set meeting dates and tasks for completion.

South Carolina

Curriculum Review Project

During March 2009, the SECC continued work with the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) on the Standards Support System (S³), which includes multiple tools and resources to assist teachers in effectively using the state's academic standards. Components of the system include the 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 the curriculum. In March, SECC and SCDE staff met via conference call and had a face-to-face session on March 10 to continue work on the project. Four SECC program associates are serving as team members (Camille Chapman, Ramona Chauvin, Glenda Copeland, and Concepcion Molina) and providing expertise in specific content areas.

Leadership Curriculum Review

Housed within the SCDE is the Office of School Leadership (OSL) whose primary mission is to provide a continuum of professional development opportunities and experiences for educational leaders. The OSL offers a range of programs that include opportunities for those who aspire to the role of school administrator to those who are nearing retirement. All the programs have a foundation in state and national standards for educational leaders and help build the skills and competencies needed to succeed in various phases of a leader's development. OSL offerings include the following:

- Foundations in School Leadership is designed to help teachers determine if school leadership is their desired career path
- Assistant Principal Program for Leadership Excellence is designed for newly assigned assistant principals
- Principal Induction Program provides training for newly appointed

principals (content is practical and deemed essential in a principal's 1st year on the job)

- School Leader's Executive Institute is a world-class initiative designed to give veteran principals insight, knowledge, and competencies to lead schools to success
- Institute for District Administrators is a 6-day training session for assistant and associate superintendents, program directors, and other school district officers

To learn more about OSL programs, visit <http://ed.sc.gov/agency/Educator-Quality-and-Leadership/>

During these tough economic times, every program offering at the SCDE is re-examining the role it must play to provide service of the highest quality to the state's education community. In that spirit, Mark Bounds, deputy superintendent, educator quality and leadership, requested that the SECC provide an on-site review of the leadership curriculum. On March 18–19, SECC staff Darlene Brown and Robyn Madison-Harris observed training sessions at the department, met with SCDE staff, and reviewed documents that support leadership training. The SECC team will distill its findings into a report for department leadership that will be used to assess and improve the state's efforts to build leadership talent.

Calendar of Events

Alabama LEA Support Roundtable Meetings April 17–July 17, 2009

Gordon Persons Building, Montgomery, AL

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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 Rtl Team. Monthly meetings are scheduled on April 17, May 22, June 19, and July 17.

SEDL Professional Development Sessions

SEDL Headquarters, Austin, TX

Contact: Laura Shankland
 SEDL communications associate
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 E-mail: services@sedl.org

Introduction to Courage to Lead June 12–14, 2009

How do leaders create the conditions in which a climate of trust and support facilitate teacher growth and student learning? The first step is for individuals to experience that climate of trust firsthand. The Courage to Lead model—developed by Parker Palmer, author of *The Courage to Teach*—provides participants with the ability to sustain and renew their commitment to school leadership.

Beyond English Language Learners: Addressing Language-Based Problems in Mathematics Instruction June 16–18, 2009

This professional learning opportunity will focus on inadvertent and often undetected problems in mathematics instruction caused by inattention to the role of language, representation, and symbolism. During highly interactive sessions, participants will link deep conceptual understanding of key mathematics concepts with the associated language and symbolism that often create barriers to student learning.

Professional Learning Communities Academy

- Session 1: June 18–19, 2009**
- Session 2: July 23–24, 2009**
- Session 3: August 17–18, 2009**

Professional learning communities (PLCs) are an effective, research-based way of reaching systemic reform within an organization. The PLC Academy gives participants the ability to create an action plan to implement effective PLCs in their schools and districts. Each session progressively builds upon the other, which necessitates attendance at all three sessions by the same people.

Southeast Comprehensive Center Spotlight

A publication of SEDL's Southeast Comprehensive Center

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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 (secc.sedl.org).

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