

Spotlight

A publication of the Southeast Comprehensive Center at SEDL

Volume 2 Number 7

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Content Center Focus

The Center on Innovation & Improvement (CII) offers an array of training opportunities, tools, and resources that focus on creating better schools. Current offerings include

[Improving SES Quality: State Approval, Monitoring, and Evaluation of SES Providers](#)

[The Impact of State Intervention on "Underperforming" Schools in Massachusetts: Implications for Policy and Practice Education](#)

[Tough Decisions: Closing Persistently Low-Performing Schools](#)

One of four national content centers supported by the U.S. Department of Education (ED), CII supports regional content centers, such as SECC, in their work to assist districts, schools, and families with the information and skills needed to make appropriate decisions on behalf of students. The [content center's Web site](#) targets areas such as charter schools, families and schools, restructuring and turnarounds, school and district improvement, state systems of support, and supplemental educational services. Visitors may access research, reports, publications, state databases, and other resources.

Highlights of State Work

Alabama

LEA Support Roundtable Meeting

With a focus on professional development, the LEA Support Roundtable (SRT) met on June 18, 2009, in Montgomery. Ann Allison, SRT coordinator, welcomed members to the session.

During the training session, guest speaker Linda Campanotta, professional development coordinator for the Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools, discussed how the Alabama Council for Leadership Development (ACL D) defines criteria for approval of professional study used to meet requirements of instructional leader certification, which are called professional learning units (PLUs). Her presentation also addressed leadership standards, professional development standards, professional study guidelines, as well as the application and approval process for ACLD.

Mary Lou Meadows, SECC Alabama state liaison, attended the session as an SRT member.

Georgia

Literacy Task Force Work

SECC staff members Ramona Chauvin and Kathleen Theodore continued to provide technical assistance to the Georgia Literacy Task Force during review and revision of the statewide literacy plan. The group plans to provide the completed plan and executive report to Dr. Sue Snow and Dr. Martha Reichrath of the Georgia Department of Education (GDE) for approval.

Thinking Maps® Workshops

From June 15–June 25, 2009, SECC program associates Concepcion Molina, Camille Chapman, Dale Lewis, Sally Wade, Chauvin, Theodore, and SECC Georgia state liaison Glenda Copeland provided support for five 2-day workshops conducted by Thinking Maps (TM) trainers and GDE staff at five locations throughout the state. The 25 schools that participated in this training will be implementing TM strategies during the coming school year to increase rigor of coursework and improve student learning. SECC staff will provide support and mentoring to GDE staff working in these schools.

TITLE I Conference Presentations

SECC program associates Chris Ferguson and Wade conducted two presentations on [A Toolkit for Title I Parental Involvement](#) at the conference as part of a larger scope of work to support implementation of Title I parental involvement provisions. Ferguson, author of the ED-sponsored toolkit, was asked to conduct hands-on sessions to build on the state's efforts to

encourage districts and schools to use this resource. Brenda Williams, a GDE staff member, introduced each session.

During the conference, SECC provided each of the 500 participants with a compact disc of the parental involvement toolkit and provided about 150 print copies of the toolkit to session attendees. GDE also received 25 extra print copies of the toolkit to use with low-performing schools. In addition, SECC distributed copies of [SEDL Letter](#), SEDL's institutional magazine, and a collection of afterschool tip sheets to all conference participants. SECC also distributed 100 sets of the [Afterschool Training Toolkit, Academic Enrichment in Afterschool](#).

Louisiana

Revised AMAOs for English Language Learners (ELLs)

On July 21, 2009, in Baton Rouge, Robert Linqunti of WestEd presented information on the Louisiana Department of Education's (LDE) revised Title III annual measurable achievement objectives (AMAOs) 1 and 2 to Title III coordinators. Maggie Rivas, SECC program associate, was on hand to introduce Linqunti to the ELL coordinators. As a follow up to the presentation, Rivas met with ELL staff members Melanie Mayeaux and Pat Doucet on July 22 to finalize a professional development plan for teachers serving the ELL student population in accordance with the new AMAOs.

Professional Development Sessions for DEs

Distinguished educators (DEs) of Louisiana participated in a 3-day professional development session in Baton Rouge on June 23–25. On Day 1, Harold Suire, master certified Emergenetics associate, facilitated his fourth session on Emergenetics, a research-based tool that explores how people think and behave. Participants commented that these sessions have provided invaluable insight to help with relationship building in the schools they serve.

On Day 2, Darlene Morgan Brown, SECC Louisiana state liaison, facilitated an interactive learning session on collaboration and effective communication. The primary resource for the session was the book *Dealing with People You Can't Stand: How to Bring Out the Best in People at Their Worst*, by Drs. Rick Brinkman and Rick Kirschner. The authors identify the 10 most unwanted behaviors and provide a lens to understanding motives behind such behavior. In pairs, DEs examined the characteristics of these behaviors, reasons why people behave the way they do, and interventions or strategies to use in getting people



to work effectively regardless of the behavior. DEs ended this session by presenting various behaviors to the large group, using visuals to describe their specific behavior (SECC's Brown is shown in photo modeling unwanted behavior).

On the last day of the session, DEs participated in a book study of *Having Hard Conversations*, by Jennifer Abrams, which was led by the North Louisiana DE cluster.

School Improvement Plan Revision Project

To date, SECC has conducted nine work sessions with LDE staff on revision of the school improvement process and template. The team has completed the final draft of the template and has submitted it to LDE's communication division for editing.

On June 16–18, the team participated in a 3-day work session to finalize the school support team trainer-of-trainer module.

Mississippi

Workshop on Addressing Inequitable Distribution of Effective Teachers

On June 30–July 1, 2009, a collaborative team—consisting of Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) staff and SECC Mississippi state liaison Debra Meibaum—participated in a National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (TQ Center) workshop, "Addressing Inequities in the Distribution of Highly Qualified and Effective Teachers: A Workshop to Move Research and Policy into Action." During the event, the team used a new workbook tool developed by the TQ Center to explore strategies to address inequities in the distribution of effective teachers.

Bias Review Committee Meeting

SECC program associate Rivas participated in Mississippi's Bias Review Committee meeting on June 8–12. Committee members reviewed assessment test items, graphics, and passages for various types of bias such as ethnicity, gender, age, religion, and socioeconomic status. The purpose of the committee is to ensure that the assessments are fair and available to all students including English language learners and students with disabilities.

Rtl Funding Subcommittee Work

On June 2, SECC program associates Ada Muoneke and Meibaum participated in a conference call with members of Mississippi's response to intervention (Rtl) funding subcommittee and Dr. W. David Tilly, SECC consultant, to discuss a draft outline of the Rtl funding decision tool, Funding Response to Intervention at the School Level: A Needs-Based Model. Dr. Tilly is modifying the decision tool based on feedback from the subcommittee. The

group plans to submit the revised tool to MDE staff for review upon completion.

Training for Assessment of English Language Proficiency

SECC staff members Rivas and Meibaum participated in MDE's World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment training on ACCESS for ELLs Scoring Reports. The purpose of ACCESS for ELLs is to monitor annual progress in grades K–12, establish when ELLs have attained English language proficiency, inform classroom instruction and assessment, provide a reliable and valid data source for accountability, and aid in decision making.

Coaches Academy Focus Group and Planning Meetings

The Office of Leadership and Professional Development at MDE has partnered with SECC's Meibaum to conduct a coaches academy focus group meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to evaluate the 2008 academy and to suggest modifications that will improve future academies. During the meeting, school-based coaches and school administrators provided perspectives that are important in assessing the effectiveness of the previously held academy. SECC program associates Erin McCann, Camille Chapman, and Meibaum will hold a follow-up meeting with MDE staff and consultants to discuss progress and next steps.

South Carolina

Continuing Efforts Support Priority Schools Project

The Palmetto Priority Schools (PPS) project of the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) provides intensive services to schools that failed to meet expected progress on student achievement as required by the Education Accountability Act. SECC is continuing its work with SCDE to build the capacity of PPS interventionists to deliver training to leadership in priority schools and districts during the 2009–2010 school year.

On July 30–31, 2009, Sandra Lindsay, SECC South Carolina state liaison, and PPS staff conducted a professional development (PD) session for PPS liaisons that work directly with school principals. During the session, SCDE's Dr. Beth Howard, Willie Frazier (from PPS staff), and Lindsay worked with PPS liaisons on tasks and responsibilities for the upcoming school year. The following outcomes were targeted in the session, which was held in Columbia, South Carolina:

- Review schedules and logistics for PPS assignments
- Practice coaching skills to use in working with assigned principals
- Finalize and practice using a monitoring and feedback form planned for PPS supervision in 2009–2010

Corrective Action Districts Focus Training on PTLC and Parent Engagement

A Summer 2009 Leadership Training Session was offered to all SCDE school districts that were in corrective action status for the 2008–2009 school year. The Office of Federal and State Accountability (OFSA) in collaboration with SECC invited district Title I coordinators, one district representative directly involved in the planning and implementation of corrective action processes, and a district parental involvement representative to participate in a training session on July 16 in Columbia.

The primary focus of the training was follow-up PD for participants who attended a November 2008 workshop on the Professional Teaching and Learning Cycle (PTLC). The July session targeted areas related to leadership and facilitation of the PTLC process. The second focal point was parental engagement improvement efforts, with training held in Columbia. Kathy Mason, Marsha Johnson, and Karen Williams, education associates in OFSA, worked with SECC staff to plan and deliver the PD session to about 60 participants.

Calendar of Events

Adolescent Literacy: How to Access and Comprehend Text

August 12–14, 2009
Jackson Marriott Hotel
Jackson, MS

Contact: Terrie Johnson
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This interactive session will focus on helping middle and high school teachers see their roles not as teachers of reading, but as teachers of how to access information from the different kinds of text used in their classes. Participants will briefly examine their own reading and literacy strategies, review scientifically based reading and literacy approaches, and learn how to restructure learning tasks that emphasize both content and access of text and comprehension as essential goals.

SEDL's Center for Professional Learning

SEDL Headquarters
Austin, TX

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Professional Teaching and Learning Cycle August 11–13, 2009

PTLC is an ongoing, job-embedded training approach in which teachers collaborate to plan and implement standards-based lessons. This session will introduce participants to the six-step cycle, the leadership roles that support the approach, and the contextual conditions necessary to implement the approach effectively.

Program Evaluation 101

October 19–21, 2009

This training will explore key issues related to a program's success in producing intended outcomes, such as clarifying the program's theory of change, confirming that activities are being implemented, and identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses. Participants will engage in activities derived from typical district and school program planning and evaluation contexts.

Southeast Comprehensive Center Spotlight

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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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