

# Spotlight

A publication of the Southeast Comprehensive Center at SEDL

Volume 2 Number 8

In this issue:	Page:
SECC Events	1
Highlights of State Work	1
Calendar of Events	4

## SECC Events

### Regional Mathematics Institute

What strategies and actions are recommended to improve math instruction and achievement of students nationwide? These topics and other key factors were addressed during SECC's regional mathematics institute, [Constructing Foundations for Success: Implications of the National Mathematics Advisory Panel Report](#), July 28–30, 2009, in Atlanta. The institute was designed to build capacity within state departments of education through timely, high-quality presentations related to the National Mathematics Advisory Panel Report (NMPR). Additionally, the institute provided access to professional expertise and resources in math based on the recommendations of the report.

Teams from all five states served by SECC—Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina—participated in the institute. To kick off the event, Russell Gersten, executive director of Instructional Research Group and a key member of the math advisory panel, provided an overview of the panel's work. In addition, Tricia Coulter, Kristin McGraner, and Dan Reschly, of the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, discussed teacher education, critical foundations for algebra and math instruction, and preparation and development of effective math teachers. SECC staff led topic discussions and coordinated planning efforts of state teams around the NMPR recommendations.

Prior to the institute, SECC state liaisons Darlene Morgan Brown, PhD, Glenda Copeland, MA, Mary Lou Meadows, EdD, Debra Meibaum, MAT, and Sandra Lindsay, EdD, along with SECC math content specialists Maria Torres, MA, Concepcion Molina, EdD, and Camille Chapman, MEd, facilitated pre-institute luncheons for each state to inform team members of the activities of the institute. SECC also will host post-institute luncheons for

participants to review the progress made via the plans produced at the institute.

### Parental Involvement Toolkit Videoconference and Webinar

On August 26, 2009, SECC hosted a videoconference and webinar from SEDL's Austin headquarters for state department staff in its region (Parental Information and Resource Center directors also were invited to participate). The presentation, *A Toolkit for Title I Parental Involvement*, explored the role partnerships can play in supporting the implementation of Title I parental involvement provisions. During the event, Karen Williams, Title I parental involvement coordinator, South Carolina Department of Education, presented the state department's work (which is supported by SECC) in defining parental engagement and the roles for states, districts, and schools.

## Highlights of State Work

### Alabama

#### Evaluation of State Support System Efforts

On July 16, 2009, SECC Alabama state liaison Mary Lou Meadows met with staff at the Alabama State Department of Education to discuss evaluation of state support system efforts. The state department has asked SECC to review its evaluation instruments and plans, offer feedback on what needs to be accomplished, and provide samples of what other states have done to evaluate their state support system efforts as well as instruments that SEDL has developed for this type of evaluation process. A follow up meeting to plan next steps will be scheduled in coming months.

#### LEA Support Roundtable Meeting

The LEA Support Roundtable met July 17 in Montgomery. The morning session included an inspirational speaker from Florida who has been successful in turning around several failing schools. The afternoon session included discussions on how sections support the statewide response to intervention (RtI)

process, a possible tracking document for LEAs, and work on professional learning units. Meadows attended as a member of the roundtable.

### **Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative**

On July 8, SECC's Meadows attended a session of the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) training by invitation of Tod Beers, AMSTI coordinator. Beers described the history and future plans for the initiative after which visitors were invited to observe sessions at each grade level. AMSTI is the state department's initiative to improve math and science teaching statewide. A blue-ribbon committee comprised of K–12 educators, higher education representatives, and business leaders designed AMSTI, which is research-based and incorporates best practices for math and science instruction. The initiative provides professional development, equipment and materials, and on-site support to participating schools.

Schools qualify to become official AMSTI schools by sending all their math teachers, science teachers, and administrators to 2-week summer institutes for two summers. During the institutes, teachers receive grade and subject specific training that is highly applicable to their classrooms from master teachers who have been certified as AMSTI trainers.

## **Georgia**

### **Thinking Maps® Evaluation and Follow-up Planning**

SECC program associate Erin McCann, PhD, and SECC Georgia state liaison Glenda Copeland recently met with Kathy Carrollton and Kristy Kueber, program staff for the Thinking Maps program, to complete the evaluation design. The group completed the evaluation plan and the data collection timeline.

Also, Copeland met with Georgia Department of Education staff Lynda Martin, associate superintendent, Erin Barnett, director of state directed schools, and Kathy Carrollton to discuss possible strategies for follow-up support to schools implementing Thinking Maps this school year. Final adequate yearly progress (AYP) numbers were released, indicating that nine schools in the state came off the needs improvement list.

### **School Improvement Conference**

SECC's Copeland attended 1 day of a 5-day workshop for new state directors. After completing orientation on their roles in supporting school improvement at their schools, participants joined other members of the state department division for 4 days of work on formative assessment and planning.

## **Louisiana**

### **Academy of Pacesetting States: Seeing Change Through to the Classroom**

Well-trained, highly skilled change agents and instructional experts are needed to build capacity for improvement in districts and schools. Districts and schools look to state education staff for this expertise. The Center on Innovation & Improvement (CII), through the Academy of Pacesetting States, is poised to provide the necessary training and consultation designed to support states in ramping up their systems of support by developing skilled experts in three critical areas leadership, change, and instruction.

Nine states from seven regional comprehensive centers have chosen to send a team to participate in this yearlong academy—Alaska, Arkansas, Idaho, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, Montana, Oklahoma, and Virginia. Each team includes a key administrator, two staff qualified to be change agents, two instructional specialists and one representative from the respective regional comprehensive center. On July 19, 2009, the teams participated in an initial 5-day training at the ETS Chauncey Conference Center in Princeton, New Jersey. They will receive ongoing support through distance learning activities, monthly telephone conferences with academy staff, as well as a year-end, 3-day meeting and advanced training.

During the event, state teams—in collaboration with their respective regional center representative—engaged in training, consultation, and support to develop expertise in effective state systems of support. Participants also heard viewpoints from leaders immersed in change initiatives, including Paul Pastorek, Louisiana state superintendent of education, on *The Role of the State as Change Agent*; Heidi Ramirez, Temple University College of Education, on *Change in Big Districts*; Larry Kugler on *Indicators of Effective Instruction*; and Gordon Cawelti on *Instructional Leadership*. In addition, the facilitators introduced participants to several CII publications—*Tough Decisions: Closing Persistently Low-Performing Schools*, *Performance-Based Dismissals: Cross-Sector Lessons for School Turnarounds*, and *Breaking the Habit of Low Performance: Successful School Restructuring Stories*.



Darlene Morgan Brown, SECC Louisiana state liaison, attended the training with a 5-member team from the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE). Pictured are (left to right) Donna Nola-Ganey, assistant superintendent; Brenda Jeans, instructional supervisor; Janet Langlois, section leader; Tasha Anthony, school improvement supervisor; Darlene Brown, SECC state liaison; Paul Pastorek, state superintendent; and Ralph Thibodeaux, deputy director of high school redesign. As a follow up, the Louisiana Academy Pacesetter Team met on August 17 to discuss next steps.

### Curriculum and Standards Division Work Sessions

In early June, LDE participated in work sessions to develop a framework for comprehensive courses and a professional learning module for the mathematics curriculum for grade 5. On July 28–30, the presentation team for the fifth grade math course-specific training completed the first of four workshops with teachers in East Baton Rouge. The next training session was held August 28–29.

Based on feedback from the evaluations, participants viewed the training as a positive learning experience. Teacher #15 commented, “I used to think that elementary math only involved the algorithmic process for addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, now I know it is much more. It encompasses strategies and activities to allow students to conceptually understand and grapple with the mathematics.”

## Mississippi

### Standards for English Language Learners

On July 14, 2009, Maggie Rivas, MA, SECC program associate, provided technical assistance to Yvette Gilbert, Title III coordinator, Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), in reviewing and revising the document *Mississippi Guidelines for English Language Learners*. On July 15–16, Rivas met with MDE staff and ELL practitioners to present the recommended

revisions. On July 15, Rivas also participated in the second World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Mississippi Alignment Study, which focuses on aligning the state’s standards with WIDA standards.

### Online Professional Development for Coaches

SECC Mississippi state liaison Debra Meibaum provided technical assistance to MDE staff members Paula Vanderford, Connie Ratcliff, John Cartwright, and Carley Platt regarding online professional development on July 13. The group reviewed the draft rubric *Expectations for Online Instructors with Mississippi Virtual Public Schools (MVPS)* and developed a draft outline for the July 26 training for online coaches. A follow-up meeting was held August 24 at SECC’s Mississippi office.

### Rtl Coordinating Council Meeting

Meibaum met with the MDE Rtl Coordinating Council on July 12 to continue review of the implementation of the state department’s Rtl action plans. Attendees discussed a number of key topics—work sessions #7 and #8; Summer Principals Institutes; training plan for 2009–2010; coordinated technical assistance system; outreach to teacher and administrator preparation programs; Rtl funding guide; high school implementation; Rtl manual update; and the speakers bureau. A walk-through for the Rtl Speakers Bureau presentation was rescheduled for August 19.

## South Carolina

### Palmetto Priority Schools Project

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) has designated the Palmetto Priority Schools (PPS) to receive intensive services. In August, staff at SCDE and the PPS project collaborated on three activities to support the agency’s capacity to work with low-performing schools. An ongoing activity is scheduled planning sessions between Sandra Lindsay, SECC South Carolina state liaison; David Rawlinson, director of special programs; and Beth Howard and Willie Frazier of PPS staff. Dale Lewis, PhD, SECC program associate, joined the planning team in August as final plans were made for three regional collaboration meetings for the fall.

A key element of PPS work with designated schools is the building of their capacity to work effectively with partners in the home school community to strengthen the base of support for schools. Each PPS school has one or more partners who assist the school in achieving its improvement goals. SECC staff and Paula Harris, PPS partnership coordinator, hosted a PPS Partners Symposium on August 11. Representatives from higher education and community partners convened to share successes and to plan future projects in their assigned schools.

On August 25, the first regional collaboration meeting was held in Colleton County, during which learning tasks were developed and delivered to four key audiences.

## Calendar of Events

### Mississippi Department of Education Work Sessions

Jackson Marriott Hotel, Jackson, MS

Contact: Debra Meibaum

Phone: 601-605-2221

E-mail: [debra.meibaum@sedl.org](mailto:debra.meibaum@sedl.org)

### Statewide System of Support (SSOS) Work Session #7

September 1, 2009

During this follow-up work session, MDE and SECC staff will continue the planning process for strengthening the Mississippi Statewide System of Support. Participation in this event is by invitation only from MDE.

### Response to Intervention Work Session #8

September 2–3, 2009

This follow-up work session will target ongoing planning of technical assistance for statewide implementation of the Rtl initiative. Participants include MDE, Southeast Regional Resource Center, Southeast Equity Center, and SECC. Participation is by invitation only from MDE.

### MDE Rtl High School Focus Group Work Session

September 14, 2009

Northwest Rankin High School Career Center  
Flowood, MS

Contact: Jean Massey

Phone: 601-359-3764

E-mail: [jmassey@mde.k12.ms.us](mailto:jmassey@mde.k12.ms.us)

The outcome for the work session is to identify ways to bridge the Rtl process from elementary/middle school to high school to provide a seamless transition of the Rtl process. Participation is by invitation only from MDE.

#### Southeast Comprehensive Center Spotlight

A publication of SEDL's Southeast Comprehensive Center

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, EdD ([lou.meadows@sedl.org](mailto:lou.meadows@sedl.org))  
Georgia State Liaison: Glenda Copeland, MA ([glenda.copeland@sedl.org](mailto:glenda.copeland@sedl.org))  
Louisiana State Liaison: Darlene Brown, PhD ([darlene.brown@sedl.org](mailto:darlene.brown@sedl.org))  
Mississippi State Liaison: Debra Meibaum, MAT ([debra.meibaum@sedl.org](mailto:debra.meibaum@sedl.org))  
South Carolina State Liaison: Sandra Lindsay, EdD ([slindsay@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto: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](http://secc.sedl.org)).

SEDL  
4700 Mueller Blvd., Austin, TX 78723, 800-476-6861, [www.sedl.org](http://www.sedl.org)

SOUTHEAST COMPREHENSIVE CENTER at SEDL  
3501 N. Causeway Blvd., Suite 700, Metairie, LA 70002, 800-644-8671, [secc.sedl.org](http://secc.sedl.org)

Copyright © 2009 by SEDL. The contents of this publication were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The contents do not, however, necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and one should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. You are welcome to reproduce the Southeast Comprehensive Center Spotlight and distribute copies at no cost to recipients; please credit SEDL as the publisher.