

# Spotlight

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## Response to Intervention Summit

Historic Charleston was the setting for the Southeast Comprehensive Center’s Rtl Summit: Tiered Interventions and Evidence-Based Strategies for Improving Student Outcomes in High School February 24–25, 2010. Participants included 7-member state teams composed of staff from various divisions (curriculum and instruction–literacy, algebra, Rtl, school improvement, dropout prevention, special education) within the Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina departments of education as well as other stakeholders.

To kick off Day 1, Dr. Louis Danielson, senior advisor, National Center on Response to Intervention, and Dr. Joe Harris, principal analyst, National High School Center, American Institutes on Research, moderated a discussion on tiered interventions in high school. NCRtl and NHSC panelists also discussed the collaborative, federally funded project High School Tiered Intervention Initiative. Pictured are (left to right) Dr. Tessie Rose, research analyst, NCRtl; Dr. Danielson; Dr. Harris; and Jenny Scala, MA, technical assistance support specialist, NCRtl.



In the afternoon, attendees learned about challenges, lessons, strategies, and outcomes from high school principals, a teacher, and a district’s Rtl coordinator from the states of Georgia, Louisiana, and Washington. The first day concluded with cross-

state discussions on implementing Rtl in high school in small, role-alike groups.

Dr. Lois Adams-Rodgers, deputy executive director, Council of Chief State School Officers, commenced Day 2 with a motivational message on personalizing learning for the next generation of learners and the promise that Rtl holds for accomplishing this goal.

The theme for Day 2 was bridging research to practice, which was addressed in six topical strands—academic literacy, algebra, behavior, dropout prevention, college and career readiness/post-school outcomes, and 9<sup>th</sup> grade transition. Participants learned dropout preventions strategies from the NHSC and Dr. Loujeania Bost, director, National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities, Clemson University. Also, Dr. Ken Geisick, superintendent, Riverbank Unified School District, discussed how to apply academic literacy instruction and intervention.

In addition, a high school algebra teacher spoke about the application of tiered algebra instruction and intervention implemented at his school. Dr. Joe Olmi, psychology chair, University of Southern Mississippi, reported current research on positive behavior supports, and a high school principal discussed the application of behavior interventions in his school. Dr. David Johnson, director, National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, University of Minnesota, presented 9<sup>th</sup> grade transition strategies and the research-based Check and Connect program to increase student engagement and motivation. Dr. Charlotte Alverson, research associate, National Post-School Outcome Center, University of Oregon, and a senior consultant from Educators for Social Responsibility, spoke on strategies for post-school outcomes/college and career readiness in the Rtl framework.

The summit ended with state team meetings in which participants processed their learning experiences and addressed possible next steps.

Summit resources will be published on the SECC Web site shortly. For more information on Rtl topics, access [Rtl in High Schools](#) or contact SECC staff [Ada Muoneke](#), PhD, program associate, or the state liaisons via [Contact Us](#).

## Highlights of State Work

### Alabama

#### ELL Academic Language Project

On February 1, 2010, Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) staff Heidi Goertzen, Christine Spear, and Ann Allison participated in a telephone conference planning session with SECC staff Mary Lou Meadows, EdD, Alabama state liaison, and program associates Maggie Rivas, MA, and Georgina Gonzalez, MA. The group discussed plans for a series of professional development sessions on English language learner academic language. The Alabama committee also held a telephone conference February 4 to discuss pertinent issues for the state training. Meadows represented SECC during the meeting.

#### Program Evaluation Training

ALSDE staff Sally Longshore, Brooke Blair, Calvin Vance, and Mark Ward participated in a work session with Erin McCann, PhD, SECC program associate, in Montgomery February 8–9. The training component included examining the current evaluation template to make it a more comprehensive instrument. The team also made plans for the local education agency program evaluation session at the Mega 2010 Conference July 23 in Mobile. In addition to the work session, McCann facilitated an additional training session March 3–4 with the assistance of state liaison Meadows.

### Georgia

#### Support for Thinking Maps® Implementation

On February 3, 2010, Glenda Copeland, MA, SECC Georgia state liaison, met with Cheryl Hunley, state director, Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), and Melody Morgan, principal of Coretta Scott King Young Women's Leadership Academy, to observe implementation of Thinking Maps (TM) at the Atlanta-based school. Teachers have completed introduction of all maps, and there is evidence of their use in classrooms. Hunley identified math as an area of need for implementation support.

Also, SECC's Copeland and Concepción Molina, EdD, program associate, met with teachers by grade level, school math coaches, and state directors from Marshall, Eddy, and Baker Middle Schools in Columbus for a facilitated work session February 9–10 on the use of TM in math instruction. Molina provided a handout with examples of each map using math content and led a discussion about how to teach specific content. State directors felt that the sessions were helpful and were targeted to their needs.

On February 11, Molina made his second visit to Alonzo A. Crim Open High School in Atlanta with Dyanna Agee, GaDOE state director. The primary focus of the visit was classroom observations with an emphasis on mathematics instruction. Future visits will focus on assisting teachers in the application of the maps in their classrooms.

Camille Chapman, MEd, SECC program associate, completed her second visits with state director Cindy Russell at Murphy Middle School (Augusta) and state director John Newman at T.J. Elder Middle School (Sandersville) February 11–12. At each school, Chapman and the state director met with math teachers to discuss implementation issues and to share TM strategies using released test items to help them prepare students for the upcoming Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests.

### Louisiana

#### Rtl Task Force

Ada Muoneke, SECC program associate, attended the third Rtl Task Force meeting at the Louisiana Department of Education January 27, 2010. This meeting is a continuation of work on a plan for statewide implementation of Rtl. The group continued to refine the draft plan that was developed October 7, 2009, and discussed the *Rtl Process Guide* for local education agencies, which is a work-in-progress. The next step is to complete the implementation plan for submission to the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The task force also participated in a professional development session on implementation and sustainability issues conducted by Dr. Tessie Rose, of the NCRtl. On March 12, the group held a follow-up meeting.

#### Migrant Education Needs Assessment Committee

Darlene Morgan Brown, PhD, SECC Louisiana state liaison, was invited to serve on the Louisiana Migrant Education Program (MEP) Comprehensive Needs Assessment Update Committee. The committee met February 3–4 in Baton Rouge and was charged with completing the triennial review of the educational progress of children and youth identified and served by the MEP. The next step is development of the state's MEP Service Delivery Plan (SDP). Update meetings for the SDP work are tentatively scheduled May 5–6 and June 2–3.

## Mississippi

### Rtl for ELLs Session

On January 30, 2010, Maggie Rivas, SECC program associate, copresented with Yvette Gilbert, English language learner coordinator, Mississippi

Department of Education (MDE), at the Alabama-Mississippi Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages annual conference in Oxford. During



the session (pictured), “Why Rtl for ELLs?,” participants examined practical issues regarding Rtl and language development for ELLs and reflected on the challenges to effective implementation. They also explored ways to assist with improving the achievement of ELLs through language development. Debra Meibaum, MAT, SECC Mississippi state liaison, facilitated the session.

### Mississippi Virtual Public School

On February 2, SECC staff Meibaum and Danny Martinez, MA, program associate, participated in a follow-up work session with MDE staff regarding the Mississippi Virtual Public School’s online peer coaching component. The group revised the peer coach manual and responsibilities documents in preparation for submission to MDE’s legal department. They also updated the application processes (i.e., job requirements, expectations, application questions) for peer coaches and teachers.

### Alternative Education Efforts

On February 4, a committee was convened to edit the draft guidebook for alternative education in Mississippi. The committee consisted of a local superintendent, two alternative school principals, a counselor, a special education bureau director from MDE, and the advocacy coordinator and executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Mississippi. On February 5, SECC and MDE staff discussed the committee’s recommendations, plans for training educators around the state using the guidebook, and various topics related to alternative education. SECC will continue to partner with MDE staff during planning and execution of the training.

### 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers

SEDL program associates Marion Baldwin, MA, and Joe Parker, MS, presented six, 90-minute sessions to afterschool leaders and staff at the MDE 21st CCLC Winter Institute in Meridian

February 9–11. The sessions were directed at strengthening academic practice and family/community involvement in the afterschool program. Each participant received *A Practitioner’s Guide—Building and Managing Quality Afterschool Programs*. The practice guide, recently published by SEDL’s [National Center For Quality Afterschool](#) with funding from the C.S. Mott Foundation, provides practitioners with information about key practices in four focus areas—program organization, academic programming, supportive relationships in afterschool, and achieving program outcomes.

## South Carolina

### Turnaround Specialists Project

During late January and February, SECC program associates Camille Chapman, Dale Lewis, PhD, and Robyn Madison-Harris, EdD, continued to work with Steve Abbott, Title I director, and a 6-member South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) task force to provide guidance on the use of turnaround specialists in some of the state’s lowest performing schools. In the initial meeting, the team defined the role of a turnaround specialist and identified characteristics of turnaround leaders. SECC staff provided an overview of literature on the topic and gave each team member a flash drive of resources referenced in the meeting. The team developed a plan for identifying the schools to be targeted, a job description for a turnaround specialist, and a timeline (January–July 2010) for implementing the initiative. SECC and SCDE task force members have continued to exchange information and refine materials to be used in the project.

### PPS Professional Development Project

On February 9, the first of three regional collaboration meetings was held in Walterboro. SCDE staff members in the Office of Special Projects provide ongoing support for a group of low-performing schools identified as Palmetto Priority Schools (PPS). Representatives from PPS and districts in the Lowcountry area attended the meeting. The planning team (identified below) conducted professional development sessions for PPS principals and their PPS liaisons, district superintendents, and school board representatives from each district with a PPS school. David Rawlinson, director, special projects, SCDE, provided a legislative update and addressed program requirements for the remainder of the school year.

In addition, Sandra Lindsay, EdD, SECC South Carolina state liaison, facilitated a session on the importance of relationships and a healthy school culture. Cindy McIntee and Joy Mordica, EdD, of the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, presented compelling research on stereotype threat.

Participants were also given an overview of i-Coach, a coaching initiative supported by the Office of Curriculum and Standards for on-site coaches in the state’s schools, including PPS.

Each month, planning sessions are held to refine program activities for the coming months. Participants include Rawlinson, SECC staff Lindsay and Dale Lewis, as well as Dr. Beth Howard, Willie Frazier, and Paula Harris of PPS staff.

## Calendar of Events

### Thinking Strategically Across ARRA Funds

March 30, 2010  
 Doubletree Hotel Crystal City-National Airport,  
 Arlington, VA

Key U.S. Department of Education officials and other national experts will speak with invited education leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders from across the Appalachia, Mid-Atlantic, and Southeast regions about the Obama Administration’s reform priorities and the status of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act initiatives. This meeting is a collaborative service of the Regional Educational Laboratories for the Appalachia, Mid-Atlantic, and Southeast regions and the Appalachia, Florida, Mid-Atlantic, and Southeast Regional Comprehensive Centers.

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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](http://secc.sedl.org)).

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