

# Spotlight

A publication of the Southeast Comprehensive Center at SEDL

Volume 3 Number 4

In this issue:	Page:
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Forum	1
NCLB Scanning Service Update	1
Highlights of State Work	1
Calendar of Events	4

## American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Forum

On March 30, 2010, the Southeast Comprehensive Center (SECC) joined with the comprehensive centers and regional educational laboratories that serve the Southeast, Florida, Appalachia, and Mid-Atlantic regions to conduct a regional forum, *Thinking Strategically Across ARRA Funds*, in Arlington, Virginia. Each SECC state sent a team to the meeting representing the state education agency (SEA), local education agencies (LEAs), the state board of education, and state institutions of higher education.

The forum's purpose was to support effective use of federal funds by providing a setting for participants to engage with top officials from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) regarding ARRA grant submissions and implementation. The forum also provided opportunities to discuss the Obama Administration's education reform priorities as well as funding opportunities and initiatives.

At ED's request, the Recovery Act forum was co-hosted by the comprehensive centers and the regional educational laboratories.

## NCLB Scanning Service Update

*"Every child in America deserves a world-class education."*

With this statement, President Barack Obama encapsulates the central focus of [A Blueprint for Reform: The Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act](#). In addition to advocating a world-class educational system, he challenges the nation to achieve a new goal of leading the world in college completion by 2020.

Released in March 2010 by ED, the blueprint is featured in the Southeast Comprehensive Center's [NCLB Scanning Service](#).

The blueprint builds on the reform areas of ARRA—(a) adoption of rigorous college- and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments; (b) implementation of data systems and use of data for improvement; (c) increasing teacher effectiveness and equitable distribution of effective teachers; and (d) turning around the lowest-performing schools. It also focuses on key priorities such as

- Improving access to effective teachers and leaders for students in high-poverty, high-minority schools
- Raising standards for all students and using assessments that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards
- Assisting states in strengthening literacy programs and providing support for high-needs districts in implementing high-quality literacy instruction
- Helping states to strengthen science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs and providing support to high-needs districts for implementing high-quality STEM instruction
- Improving and strengthening programs for English learners, other diverse learners, and students with disabilities
- Measuring and supporting schools, districts, and states and building their capacity through funding, such as formula grants, competitive grants, and School Turnaround Grants

For information on how SECC can assist with addressing the blueprint's reform areas and key priorities, contact an [SECC state liaison](#) or [Robin Jarvis](#), PhD, program director.

## Highlights of State Work

### Alabama

#### Professional Development Session IV

The Instructional Services Division of the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) sponsored a joint professional development session that was hosted and facilitated by SECC on April 23, 2010, in Montgomery.

Sandra Lindsay, EdD, SECC South Carolina state liaison, served as the facilitator. She also conducted a session on communication strategies for improving morale and productivity. Mary Lou Meadows, EdD, SECC Alabama state liaison, assisted during the session. Staff members from ALSDE presented sessions on strategies for improving communications within the state department, ways the organization can improve communication to LEAs, and how to use a common language to discuss effective instructional strategies. In the afternoon sessions, small groups developed ideas for how ALSDE can maximize effective communication strategies.

At the closing session, Thomas R. Bice, EdD, deputy state superintendent, ALSDE, provided feedback with action plans and next steps.

### **Program Evaluation Training for ALSDE Staff**

SECC staff Erin McCann, PhD, program associate, and Meadows, Alabama state liaison, met with Alabama team members Brooke Blair and Mark Ward on April 12. The purpose of the meeting was to plan the workshop session at the MEGA conference based on the evaluation document used by federal program coordinators to report progress on projects.

The team planned activities to support the following participant objectives for the July 22 workshop session:

- Increase understanding of the connection between program evaluation to the Title I LEA Plan, the federal programs monitoring document, and eGAP planning;
- Increase understanding of the differences between various outcomes; and
- Increase knowledge of indicators and performance measures for reporting the effectiveness of actions.

A follow-up meeting was scheduled June 29–30 to finalize plans for the workshop session.

### **Leadership Success Academy Summer Session**

The planning team is continuing work on the Alabama Leadership Success Academy Summer Session 2010. Team members include Catherliene Williamson and Angela Mangum of ALSDE; Sylvia Pirtle, MEd, SECC program associate; and Celina Estrada Thomas, PhD, principal, Bastrop High School in Austin, Texas. The training dates for the session are July 7–8 in Montgomery.

## **Georgia**

### **Technical Assistance**

On April 12–13, 2010, Glenda Copeland, MA, SECC Georgia state liaison, attended part two of a 4-day training for academic

coaches in Title I schools. Kathy Carrollton and Kristy Kueber of the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) conducted the training for approximately 120 coaches from across the state.

Day 1 focused on the seven strategies of formative assessment, establishing and using criteria for feedback and commentary, and effective modeling. Day 2 focused on self-assessment, conferencing, goal setting, and focused revision. Both days were balanced between learning information and applying it in the context of participants' work. This exceptional professional development session provided a process for supporting the implementation of standards-based classrooms.

On April 14, Copeland attended a school Improvement workshop by Karen Bailey, consultant with Performance Pathways Inc., on designing quality classroom assessment items. Bailey focused on assessment for learning, use of Webb's Depth of Knowledge to ensure rigor, components of quality, formative selected response item and written response design, and their use as formative and summative tools for students.

### **Support for Thinking Maps® Implementation**

SECC program associate Camille Chapman, MEd, met with John Newman, state director, on March 31 at T.J. Elder Middle School to review student artifacts and provide comments for teachers regarding the implementation of Thinking Maps (TM).

On April 1, SECC program associate Concepcion Molina, EdD, met with small groups of teachers during their planning periods at Crim High School. Molina and the teachers reviewed examples of TM applications in mathematics, and he answered teachers' questions regarding those examples. He also met with Dr. Dyanna Agee, state director, to discuss concerns and progress pertinent to the implementation of TM at the school.

On April 2, Molina conducted a 2.5-hour training session focused on the mathematics applications of Thinking Maps. Ten teachers and staff from Coretta Scott King Young Women's Leadership Academy; Cheryl Hunley, state director; and SECC state liaison Copeland attended the training session. During the session, participants made connections to the Georgia mathematics content and instructional strategies associated with TM applications. Molina also guided participants in developing additional Thinking Maps on topics that teachers had identified as being of concern with their students.

## **Louisiana**

### **Title I Online Self-Assessment Tool**

On April 15, 2010, Sylvie Hale, director of WestEd Interactive, and her associate David Bogdonoff demonstrated how the Planning and Monitoring Tracker works to monitor LEA compliance with

federal grant requirements. More than 30 participants from the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE)—representing the majority of No Child Left Behind Act programs—were in attendance. Darlene Morgan Brown, PhD, SECC Louisiana state liaison, also attended the session.

After the demonstration, participants had the opportunity to ask questions, discuss possible challenges, and obtain input on how other states are handling certain issues. LDE plans to have a feasibility study conducted regarding potential use of the tool.

### High-Performance Schools Initiative

The High-Performance Schools Initiative (HPSI) is Louisiana's program for leveraging 1003(g) School Improvement Grants (SIG). Through HPSI, LDE hopes to award those local education agencies with bold and well-crafted intervention plans with grants of up to \$500,000 per year for the next 3 years to implement their respective plans. On April 12, Louisiana state liaison Brown and Tasha Anthony of LDE facilitated an inter-rater reliability training webinar for more than 40 readers of the SIG application representing higher education, the governor's office, and community agencies. Consultants have 2 weeks to read and rate more than 150 applications.

### Academy of Pacesetter States Project—Statewide System of Support

The Louisiana Pacesetter Team continues to work on identified action items and participate in monthly distance learning opportunities and conference calls with the Center on Innovation & Improvement (CII). On April 8, the team conversed with Nancy Protheroe, CII liaison, to provide an update on development of the operational manual. After the conference call, the team reviewed draft sections and outlined next steps. On April 16, the team met to continue work on the manual. Each member was assigned a section to revise, with edits due by May 31.

## Mississippi

### Teacher of the Year Symposium

On April 22, 2010, Debra Meibaum, MAT, SECC Mississippi state liaison, participated in the 2010 Mississippi Teacher of the Year Symposium. The symposium provides each of the state school districts' "teacher of the year" the opportunity to participate in high-quality professional development sessions conducted by national, state, and local educators.

Tony Mullen, national teacher of the year, presented the keynote address. Dr. Tricia Coulter, National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, and Dr. Suzie Bunch, Mississippi Center for Education Innovation, presented sessions on "Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness."

### Response to Intervention Initiative

On April 13, Meibaum participated in the RtI Coordinating Council meeting. Council members discussed updates for the RtI manual, funding guide, Tier 2 training, technical assistance, and Tier 1 post survey. Upcoming council meetings will be scheduled on a quarterly basis, with the next meeting to be held in August 2010.

### Consolidated Federal Programs Application

Meibaum, SECC Mississippi state liaison, met with Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) staff on March 31 and April 9 to discuss the findings of the Consolidated Federal Programs Application (CFPA) Task Force. The purpose of the meetings was to identify ways that the task force findings could be incorporated into the 2010 CFPA. The CFPA statewide training was conducted April 16.

## South Carolina

### Palmetto Priority Schools

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) has designated a number of schools to receive intensive services as part of the Palmetto Priority Schools (PPS) collaborative. David Rawlinson, director, Special Projects office, and his staff have the responsibility for providing direct services to a growing number of schools that have not made expected progress. SECC staff are providing ongoing support for this initiative.

Each month, planning sessions are held to refine program activities for upcoming months. The planning team includes SECC staff members Sandra Lindsay, South Carolina state liaison, and Dale Lewis, PhD, program associate; and Rawlinson, Beth Howard, Willie Frazier, Paula Harris, and Barbara Johnson of the PPS staff. In April, several meetings were held to review activities and agenda items for an office planning retreat to be held in late May. As plans are made for the 2010–2011 academic year, Rawlinson and Howard requested that Lewis review several key documents used in the PPS process, to include the memorandum of agreement between SCDE and PPS districts and job descriptions for liaisons and coaches.

During April, Lewis drafted the format for an innovation configuration to guide PPS principals, liaisons, and coaches in

determining roles and responsibilities and measuring growth in their work. A group of PPS liaisons and their principals have been asked to provide feedback on the effectiveness of such a document for their work. If it is deemed a useful document for the PPS staff, SECC staff will assist in development and refinement of the document for use in the next school year.

### Planning Sessions and Technical Assistance

In addition to work with Palmetto Priority Schools, Lindsay has been involved in several planning activities with other offices in SCDE. South Carolina plans to resubmit its application for the federal Race to the Top program. Key staff members are collecting information and refining their plan for submission in the second round of competition.

Lindsay also has been asked to serve on the School Improvement Grants Project 180 Council. The council's primary responsibility is to serve as central oversight for SIG applicants and to monitor progress in designated schools. The initial meeting of the council was May 7.

## Calendar of Events

### Twentieth Annual Leadership Conference for Minority Administrators and Ninth Annual Southern Regional Minority Leadership Conference

*Race to the Top: Innovative Strategies for Comprehensive School Improvement*

June 1–4, 2010

Harrah's Veranda Hotel, Tunica, MS

The event is designed to provide professional development to both administrators and aspiring administrators to enhance skills needed to address relevant issues including bridging the educational divide between students; discipline and school violence; model programs in reading, mathematics, and science; parental involvement; and current civil rights issues as related to educational equity. Paradigms that will augment the ability of administrators to prepare students to meet the educational and societal challenges will be discussed. Issues will be explored, and models will be offered by a variety of qualified presenters.

Contact: Mrs. Bennie F. Jones

Phone: 601-359-3083

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

#### 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 Manager  
 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 © 2010 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.