



Great Lakes East Comprehensive Center

News for the Region

A quarterly e-newsletter for educators in Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio

Unbundling Innovation

Summer 2009

With so many education reforms taking shape, there are a lot of buzzwords flying around, and the most common one to hear these days is *innovation*. But, is innovation a mere catchword or a complicated concept and a substantive incentive? In this issue, we discuss innovation and its meaning in education at all levels (state, district, and local) but particularly at the national level.

Since early this year, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has been calling for “bold and creative reforms.” Particularly, with the release of the Race to the Top funds this fall, the Obama administration has brought national attention (and \$4.53 billion) through an award to states that is intended to lead the way to school reform and innovation. Through this competitive program, states have a historic opportunity to receive substantial support to foster and advance reform and innovation in the classroom. Another sizable fund (\$650 million in the [Investing in Innovation Fund](#)) also will be available to school districts to cultivate innovation programs and increase student achievement. These programs speak to the national attention that innovation has brought.

To bring our readers the latest thinking about innovation, we offer two special reports. Paul Kimmelman’s article defines innovation and offers a simple innovation process for educators to employ (p. 6), and Trish Brennan-Gac’s article brings a fresh perspective to viewing the current federal funding initiatives from an innovation perspective (p. 9). These two articles will help you grasp what innovation might look like at an individual educator level and what innovation is beginning to look like at a national level. An important question to ask is, “How do we all unbundle innovation?”

Barbara Youngren, Director
Great Lakes East Comprehensive Center
and Great Lakes East staff members

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This quarterly e-newsletter delivers useful, relevant, and timely information related to the NCLB Act to educators in the three states of the Great Lakes East region: Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio.

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Highlights of the Quarter

Great Lakes East Responds to ARRA With a Regional Dialogue Series

By Jennifer Reed, Program Specialist, Learning Point Associates



In response to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), which was signed into law on February 17, 2009, by President Barack Obama, the Great Lakes East Comprehensive Center and the Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center—both administered by Learning Point Associates—have been working to find ways to provide information, tools, and resources to help educators and policymakers in the Great Lakes region track ARRA developments and establish a regional network of information sharing. Great Lakes East and Great Lakes West began by reaching out to state education agency (SEA) staff and launched a series of monthly Web conferences, each looking at a different aspect of ARRA.

May 28, 2009: On Communication Strategies

Hosted on May 28, 2009, the first Web conference, titled “Communication Strategies for State Education Agencies,” featured two guests who helped provide a look at communications from the state perspective and the district perspective.

Jann Jencka, educational advisor with the Michigan Economic Recovery Office, shared information from a state perspective. She discussed the creation of the Michigan Economic Recovery Office, described its specific purposes, and shared examples of specific methods it is finding effective to communicate ARRA information to the field. Mary Kusler, assistant director for advocacy and policy at the American Association of School Administrators, spoke from a district perspective. She shared information about needs and concerns from the field related to the communication of ARRA information.

The Web conference also gave the participants the chance to highlight and discuss a number of effective communication strategies in the Great Lakes region and provided some specific examples from the Colorado and the Oregon departments of education.

June 16, 2009: On Waiver Strategies

Based on the feedback from the May Web conference, the second Web conference, held on June 16, 2009, and titled “Waiver Strategies for State Education Agencies,” was designed to assist SEAs in increasing their general knowledge about ARRA and waivers. The event provided specific examples of state approaches to waivers, responded to specific SEA questions and concerns regarding waivers, and continued to foster conversations across the states through an informal network.

Discussing ARRA waivers were three featured guests. Andrew Brownstein, editor of the *Title I Monitor* at Thompson Publishing, provided an overview of the current administration’s view on waivers as well as his personal thoughts on what is likely to be offered in the near future. Participants then heard from Trish Boland, Ph.D., Title I coordinator of the Office of Federal Program Administration, and Cheryl Miller, Ed-Flex coordinator, both from the Colorado Department of Education. These two speakers provided insights on



Colorado being an Ed-Flex state, the additional flexibility that the program allows, and how the objectives of Ed-Flex could be applied to ARRA waivers

July 10, 2009: On Guidance from the Office of Management and Budget

The third Web conference, “How Much Does OMB’s Guidance Really Tell Us?” occurred on July 10, 2009. Trish Brennan-Gac, counsel and senior policy advisor at Learning Point Associates, began the conversation by reviewing the latest information about the recently released timeline for ARRA reporting guidance. She also provided some additional information about the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)-sponsored webinars in late July on the implementation of the reporting guidance.

Also featured at the event was Cynthia Brown, deputy director of the Risk Management Service of the Office of the Secretary at the U.S. Department of Education. She provided participants with the latest information from the Education Department and its future plans to release program-specific guidance and other tools to support SEAs in their ARRA reporting duties. Participants also had the chance to voice their questions and concerns about the reporting requirements and the impact that these requirements may have on SEAs.

August 5, 2009—On New ARRA Programs

On August 4, 2009, the U.S. Department of Education hosted an invitation-only Education Stakeholders Forum. Great Lakes East and Great Lakes West representative Trish Brennan-Gac, counsel and senior policy advisor at Learning Point Associates, had the opportunity to attend the event and personally speak to Education Department representatives about the questions and concerns raised by SEAs in the Great Lakes region regarding the recently released Race to the Top and other ARRA program draft materials. Questions were submitted by SEA staff prior to the meeting. Great Lakes East and Great Lakes West hosted a Web conference on August 5, 2009, the day after the Education Stakeholders Forum, to share the information and insights that were provided by the Education Department in response to the state questions and concerns. Brennan-Gac facilitated the Web conference, titled “Race to the Top, Investing in Innovation Fund, and State Fiscal Stabilization Fund Phase II.” During the call, participants had opportunities to ask clarifying questions, submit additional concerns and queries for Great Lakes East and Great Lakes West to bring back to the Education Department, and access new materials, resources, and information that are available to help them develop and craft official comments on the draft materials.

Get Easy Access to the ARRA Web Dialogue Summer Series Information!

The Great Lakes East website has established new sections that provide current information regarding ARRA. The [Spotlights section of the website](#) provides ARRA information and guidance from the U.S. Department of Education as well as resources from Learning Point Associates. New pages provide state-specific ARRA links for [Indiana](#), [Michigan](#), and [Ohio](#) and links to national resources. In addition, a dedicated page has been developed to house the Regional ARRA Web Dialogue Series and its resources. You also can contact Great Lakes East with any specific questions regarding ARRA via e-mail: GreatLakesEastInfo@learningpt.org



Regional High School Dialogue Series Transitions to a Community of Practice With a Regional Webinar About On-Track Indicators

By Victoria Cirks, Consultant, Learning Point Associates

During the past year, Great Lakes East and Great Lakes West have hosted a series of Regional High School Dialogues for the SEAs in the Great Lakes region to discuss issues and collaborate regarding high school improvement. Through this new regional network, SEAs have established relationships, shared information and their collective knowledge base, and built a foundation of trust that can be utilized to examine topics in more depth and with greater impact.

Building on that trust, Great Lakes East and Great Lakes West have begun the transformation of the Regional High School Dialogue series into a community of practice based on the framework for successful collaborations from the IDEA Partnership at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education. This community is now called the Great Lakes High School Community of Practice.

The new structure for the Great Lakes High School Community of Practice combines the strengths of technology while respecting the value of direct, face-to-face communication. Elements include the following:

- A series of regional webinars featuring prominent researchers, policy experts, and practitioners who can address specific high school reform and improvement topics
- On-site facilitation of cross-divisional participation and dialogue at SEA offices
- Follow-up activities and technical assistance focused on state-identified needs
- Web-based and e-mail communication tools

The first community of practice event, a webinar titled “Connecting Research to Practice: Developing Systems of On-Track Indicators and Supports to Increase Graduation Rates,” was held May 22, 2009, in collaboration with Great Lakes West and REL Midwest. Elaine Allensworth, Ph.D., codirector of statistical analysis at the Consortium on Chicago School Research, and Paige Ponder, director of Graduation Pathways at Chicago Public Schools (CPS), were the featured guests on the 90-minute regional webinar.

Dr. Allensworth provided an overview of her research about on-track indicators (freshman grade point average, freshman course performance, freshman attendance) and discussed how ninth-grade course performance is highly predictive in determining which students will graduate and which students will not. Ponder discussed how this research was used to develop tools, EdStat and Freshman Success Reports, and a system of supports for CPS students.

In response to the feedback from SEA staff at previous dialogues, this first community of practice event focused on the critical link between research and practice. One participant shared, “Data removes excuses or emphasis on things that make no impact; clearly identifiable were elements that can make an impact on graduation rates. The link with CPS’ reaction to the data was critical and pointed to thoughtful and positive initiatives, not just easy solutions.”

Another focus of this event was to continue the discussion regarding middle to high school transition, which began at the March 2009 webinar. (The [Spring 2009 News for the Region](#) provides more information on this



webinar.) One participant's key takeaway from the webinar was "the importance of immediately connecting incoming students to the curriculum." In response to the participants' suggestions and ideas from the webinars, Great Lakes East currently is planning the next series of events as part of the Great Lakes High School Community of Practice. An archive of the May 22 webinar will be available on the [Great Lakes East](#) website.

REL Midwest Events Connect Research to Practice



During the coming months, practitioners and policymakers will have an opportunity to deepen their understanding of evidence-based research through a series of events sponsored by REL Midwest at Learning Point Associates.

Featuring research funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES), the events are intended to help educators make informed choices that will add value to their efforts.

Event participants working in the seven states served by REL Midwest (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin) may be eligible for reimbursement by REL Midwest for transportation expenses and one night of lodging (if applicable) at federal per diem rates. There are no registration fees, but participants must make their own travel arrangements. For additional information, please contact Peggie Garcia by e-mail (peggie.garcia@learningpt.org) or telephone (312-288-7642). To preview and register for upcoming events or to browse event archives, visit the [REL Midwest Upcoming Events Web page](#). (The event schedule is subject to change).



Special Report

Education and Innovation

By Paul Kimmelman, Ed.D., Senior Advisor, Learning Point Associates

Hardly a day goes by when you don't read something about the need for more innovation in education in the United States. A general message is that the basic education model in this country has not undergone much change over time. With the new global, technology-based society that spans the world, the need for education leaders to think innovatively or face consequences for not improving their schools is becoming more evident. Such change will necessitate creating innovative ideas that bring real change to meet the needs of 21st century learners.



Paul Kimmelman, Ed.D.

Approximately two years ago, Learning Point Associates CEO Gina Burkhardt discussed the notion that despite having to comply with challenging federal laws like NCLB, effective education leaders still needed to build a culture of innovation in their schools if they were going to be successful in the rapidly changing 21st century world. These leaders would need to implement innovative ideas to succeed because the current practices were not achieving acceptable results. As a result of Burkhardt's thoughts, I wrote a book on compliance, leadership, and innovation that will be released by Corwin Press later this year. The book includes interviews with members of Congress and education experts. One chapter of the book is devoted to innovation. In this article, I briefly summarize what I learned about innovation when writing the book and offer some suggestions to educators regarding how to implement an innovation process in their schools and beyond.

What Is Innovation?

With so much being written about innovation, it would seem intuitive that there would be a simple definition of it to inform innovative school work. Unfortunately, there are numerous definitions. I suggest that *innovation can be a simple or complex solution to a problem that makes everyday work less complicated*. For example, many years ago, an inventor named Bernard Sadow combined a suitcase with wheels and transformed the luggage industry. His product is an example of a simple innovation. An example of a complex innovation is a smart phone that can be used for e-mail, Web searches, and telephone calls; over time, the designers of phones have continued to combine them with new applications, making them more convenient and useful. Another example can be found in medicine, where eye surgery to correct vision has transformed from using a scalpel to a laser with much better results; the laser is an innovation that came from building on a body of knowledge over time and ultimately changed a surgical practice through innovative ideas.

Although educators are more likely to create simple innovations, the results could be dramatic in much the same way the suitcase with wheels was. Whether simple or complex, the process of innovation is intense and involves creative work. It is not the type of work that educators have had much of an opportunity to do in the traditional culture of American education. But with the stimulus funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the call for innovation by Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, educators have a great opportunity and impetus to think about how to use what has worked well for them and combine it with new and different products, programs, and practices that will lead to innovative approaches to the most challenging problems confronting them.



The key point is that school-based innovation teams do not have to create complex innovations to successfully transform their work. They merely have to work collaboratively to come up with bold, new ideas that improve their work.

Innovation Process

So what might be a process to use for innovation in a school or a district or even a state education agency? I suggest that the process should consist of several elements. First, an innovation team must be created and organized to pose diverse solutions to a problem. For example, suppose that there are too many students in the middle school grades who are not achieving proficiency on the state mathematics assessment. What is critically important for innovation is to create a team that is very diverse and can approach the problem from many different perspectives. That means the team needs to be composed of more than mathematics teachers and include teachers from other disciplines such as music, physical education, or technology applications who might use different approaches with these students that should be considered. For more diverse ideas, consider including parents of these students and people from other sectors (such as doctors, business leaders, sales people, and workers from other professions) who deal with these students. One highly regarded innovation design firm I worked with while writing the book includes an anthropologist on their teams. The purpose for including an anthropologist is to gain knowledge about the people who will use the product they are designing.

Second, the innovation team must identify the problem and discuss it in detail. It is important to frame the problem so that the team can focus on specific solutions. Using relevant data and teacher input, it is possible to accurately depict the important issues regarding the reasons for the lower achievement of the middle school students in mathematics based on credible evidence.

Third, the administration can create an environment and provide the context that is different for the team members from their typical setting: An innovation room can be set up! Make their work fun and include creative activities for them. Perhaps begin with an activity, such as asking them to design something with Lego pieces and award a prize for the most creative design. Context for the innovation team is important.

Next, the innovation team may break the problem down into different categories at the beginning of their work and organize into smaller groups in order to more carefully analyze each category. Perhaps one of the reasons for the lower mathematics scores in middle schools was an inability to understand problem solving. Another mathematics problem might have been computation. Each group would focus on its assignment and then bring its proposed solutions back to the entire team. As a result of smaller group interactions, the groups can gather in an innovation room, post all of their ideas on the walls, and engage in an open discussion about how they might work. The walls would be filled with diverse ideas that would be considered for new and different approaches to teaching these students.

Subsequently, after discussing the solutions, it is time to “build the prototype” and test it. Innovators build their innovation and implement it to see how it works. The innovation team will build a prototype of their proposed innovative solution and implement this prototype in the context in which it was designed to be used. One example might be using a new product, program, or practice in one of the middle grades classrooms with the target students.



Finally, the team can evaluate the innovation to determine if it is working as well as anticipated. If not, the team can modify its prototype based on what it has learned from implementing it. Innovation does not simply begin and end. It is an ongoing process.

Scaling Up the Innovation

The sample process of an innovation team described above can work at a school and also at a district or a SEA. Innovation currently is getting lots of attention at the district and SEA levels. Two examples of innovative thinking in the Great Lakes region are [Project ReImagine](#) in Michigan and recently passed legislation allowing for self-governing schools in Minnesota.

In Michigan, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Michael Flanagan is seeking proposals from school districts using federal economic recovery funds that “boldly and dramatically” reimagine their systems to ensure that all students learn and achieve at high levels. Although the initiative does not ensure that innovative ideas will be forthcoming, it does offer an opportunity for Michigan educators to consider how they could really change the way that education is delivered in their systems without the obstacle of a lack of funding hovering over potential breakthrough ideas.

In Minnesota, the Legislature authorized the creation of “site-governed” schools. Like the suitcase with wheels, these schools will have the autonomy and the flexibility of charter schools, but they must be approved by the local school board. Teachers in these schools still remain members of their local union and operate under the parts of the master agreement that were not waived. Minnesota has taken the concept of charter schools and is attempting to weave in the concept of self-governing; but it also is including the union with the hope that it will lead to new school district charter schools without the obstacle of the union resistance.

These are but two examples of stimulating innovative thinking at the state level that might lead to reforms that can be replicated by others to improve their education systems.

Despite the lack of an agreed-upon definition of innovation, it is clear that innovation is about bold, new thinking. It involves new approaches with products, programs, and practices that will be successful when trying to overcome areas that are in need of improvement. It requires education leaders to have a mindset that the innovation team will continue to work on the problem until it is successful meeting its goals. That mindset is similar to the Apollo 13 team thinking that “failure is not an option” when trying to bring back the spacecraft after it had a serious malfunction.

Today, educators have a unique opportunity with the incoming ARRA funding to support bold, new approaches to overcome challenging problems. Using an innovation process to succeed is a new practice that just might bring positive results. Be bold.



Special Report

Looking Inward for Innovation

By Trish Brennan-Gac, Counsel and Policy Advisor, Learning Point Associates



Trish Brennan-Gac

Many of today's conversations on innovation often relate to new tools or strategies that improve teaching and learning in our schools. However, legislation such as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) can also provide many different angles from which to consider this topic. In this article, I offer a fresh perspective to examine the innovations that are currently occurring at the U.S. Department of Education and to analyze how the Education Department is applying innovative approaches to new funding streams and to existing programs. These innovations can enlighten and instruct state leaders who are contemplating how to apply for, manage, and distribute stimulus funds.

In their book *Disrupting Class* (2008), Christensen, Horn, and Johnson provide a framework for considering innovation in the education setting. The authors observe that because public schools are a virtual monopoly, it can be "difficult and sometimes impossible for new business models to compete" (p. 51). And yet, they note that schools have been able to adjust and improve in reaction to each new challenge society has presented, "but doing so has not been easy" (p. 52).

The book presents two types of innovations: sustaining and disruptive. Sustaining innovations maintain the "performance improvement trajectory in the established marketplace" (p. 51). They help organizations improve what they are doing in their specific industry or market. These improvements can be considered breakthroughs or simply routine. Alternatively, disruptive innovations are not breakthrough improvements at all. Instead, they disrupt the traditional upward trajectory of a product or service in a market by introducing "a product or service that actually is not as good as what companies historically had been selling." The product is simpler and more affordable to use and can reach an entire new market of nonconsumers.

Within this framework, let's look at which new processes at the Education Department can be considered sustaining innovations. I also will highlight two examples in which the Education Department's commitments provide significant support to unfolding disruptive innovations.

Seeding Innovation Through ARRA Funds

Throughout the years, the federal government has been able to carve out an influential role in education by targeting funds to improve educational opportunities for the disadvantaged through such programs as Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). In the recent past, the Education Department took a compliance-driven approach to hold states and school districts accountable for progress, such as the adequate yearly progress requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), which reauthorized ESEA in 2001.

Today, the billions of dollars dedicated to education through ARRA provide a unique opportunity for the new administration to reshape the education agenda. Although in some instances there are few, if any, new



requirements (e.g., formula funds under the Title I program), U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan is using ARRA to shift away from a compliance-driven model by embracing opportunities presented by the Race to the Top and the Investing in Innovation funds. These competitive grants were designed to incentivize states and reward them for improvements and innovations in education that produce measureable results. Almost overnight, the big stick transformed into a much bigger carrot. However, the shift between compliance and incentives, on its own, is not necessarily innovative. What is innovative is that the shift is not occurring through the formula-funded programs but instead through the ARRA-funded competitive grants.

Through the distribution and management of these federal funds, Secretary Duncan is moving away from a traditional model to a new model, embracing competitive grants. The traditional model shaped the policies and practices of states and school districts through formula-funded programs in which every state was guaranteed an allotment of funds. As time unfolded, different approaches were employed to produce improvements. Sometimes there were incentives, and sometimes there were sanctions. But, for the most part, bold new approaches targeted to produce widespread reform utilized funds that were available to every state through a formula distribution. Examples of this are Title I, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Class Size Reduction, and Goals 2000.

The emerging model employs an incentive-based approach by tying education reforms designed to create lasting systemic improvement to competitive grants where every state is not guaranteed a share of funds. There are a couple of new twists as well. One is the integration of many different grant programs so that performance on one grant has a direct impact on an entity's ability to compete successfully for a different grant. The other is evaluating a state's use of formula funds under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) when reviewing a state's application for federal funds under competitive programs. It will be curious to see if states and districts point to their use of other formula funds (e.g., Title I and IDEA) to demonstrate progress on the [four assurances](#), although it is not required, and whether or not the Education Department eventually requires a demonstration of the use of other formula funds in future competitive grant processes.

Whether or not one views the Education Department's approach to competitive grants and funding as innovative is certainly a matter of interpretation and common definition, which people still grapple with (see Paul Kimmelman's article on p. 6). While Title I received \$10 billion in funding under the ARRA without substantial new requirements, an additional \$5 billion was funneled to the new Race to the Top and Investing in Innovation competitive grants—a significant amount of funding for an initiative's first year. Typically, initiatives begin with a small amount of funds and expand based upon early successes. Such a significant amount of initial funding, particularly for competitive grants, is unprecedented. (It should be noted that the Race to the Top fund receives the majority of the funds and only \$650 million, not insignificant, is dedicated to the Investing in Innovation fund.)

The Education Department also is unveiling new, innovative strategies to integrate grant programs. States will be judged on how well they have used previously awarded funds from other programs in order to qualify for new funds. As an example, the draft materials for Race to the Top introduce the Education Department's strategy to tie a state's use of SFSF program funds to its ability to compete successfully for Race to the Top funds. While states may not have to demonstrate progress on the four assurances to secure their second allocation of SFSF funds, they will be required to do so in order to secure additional monies through Race to the Top. Making progress on these reform areas is an absolute priority for states to compete successfully.



Under the new funding model, Secretary Duncan is seeking to achieve dramatic reforms by offering incentives through a competitive process in which every state is *not* guaranteed an allotment. Congress and the new administration could have taken the stimulus funds and funneled them through existing programs with new requirements, such as the highly qualified teacher provisions embedded in NCLB. In this way, they could have pushed every state to make some sort of progress on the four reform areas. But they didn't.

Instead, Congress funneled an unprecedented amount of money into three areas. Only SFSF provided money to each state. While this fund directs recipients to use their allotment in four key reforms, access to the second allocation is not dependant upon progress in these areas. This is due, in large part, to the state of the nation's economy. However, it now seems that the Education Department will build upon this foundation and require, as an absolute priority, a demonstration of progress on the four assurances for the Race to the Top fund. In addition, officials intend to link the Educational Technology State Grants, the State Longitudinal Data Systems, the Teacher Incentive Fund, and the Title I School Improvement programs in a way that has never been done before.

Drawing upon Christensen's and his colleagues' perspective on innovation, I do not consider these new programs or approaches disruptive. Instead, I view them as sustaining innovations, which refine the process through which the federal government funds education for continuous improvement. While the process for distributing funds is changing, the manner in which public schools are funded and operate changes little, and the improvements are, for the most part, intended to impact the general system of education that already exists.

Rising Innovations: Charter Schools and Community College System

There are, however, some interesting examples of disruptive innovations currently taking shape in our education system. One is specifically tied to an ARRA-funded program and one to a new proposal by the Obama administration. The first example is the treatment of charter schools. Through Race to the Top, the Education Department is seeking to expand and capitalize on the relatively new charter school movement. The second example harnesses the legislative process to improve the established system of community colleges.

Christensen and his colleagues apply their theory of disruptive innovation to the education setting primarily by examining the use of technology in schools. According to them, disruption is a two-stage process in which, in the first stage, "an innovator makes a product much more affordable and simpler to use than what currently exists, [even though] making the product is still complicated and expensive," or in the second stage, in which "additional technological change in the industry ... makes it simple and inexpensive to build and upgrade the products" (pp. 122–123). The authors use the introduction of the transistor radio and personal computer as examples of disruptive innovations. At the time these products were developed, existing radios and computers were large and expensive. The first transistor radio and personal computer were of lesser quality and therefore did not appeal to existing consumers. However, there was a population of nonconsumers who could not afford, or did not have access to, the larger and higher quality versions. These less expensive options met nonconsumers' needs. They were willing to settle for lower quality because, after all, *something* is better than *nothing* (p. 80). We know the rest of the story. These markets have dramatically changed, but, remember, it took more than just one decade for these transformations to occur.

Like the transistor radio or personal computer, the charter schools movement has been gaining momentum over the decades. Charter schools were created to provide an option for students who were not being served in traditional public schools. Using the *Disrupting Class* theory, these students and their families can be likened to



nonconsumers. Secretary Duncan is using the stimulus-funded programs to serve as an important catalyst for the charter school movement. Through Race to the Top, he signaled his intention to move beyond the traditional model of providing simple financial support for charter schools. Instead, he is seeking to greatly expand the number of charter schools by removing barriers to their growth. In a bold move, the administration indicated that it will judge states, in part, on the laws they have that promote and support charter schools. States that limit the expansion of these programs will be deemed ineligible for funding.

This example can be seen through the innovation lens in two ways. First, the charter school movement can be viewed as a disruptive innovation. When the movement started, these schools were designed to serve consumers who were not being served by existing public schools. While not proposing to offer a lesser quality service, the movement did begin with more limited resources than those available in the public school system. The second innovation in this scenario is the process through which the administration is exercising its influence. Extremely large grants are being offered, but, in exchange, some states must either change or enact legislation. The Education Department has not employed this approach before.

Another disruptive innovation in which the Obama administration is seeking to invest critical support is through its efforts to reform and strengthen community colleges. These institutions were created to provide high school graduates as well as adults with opportunities to develop technical and workforce skills not available through private and public institutions that catered to individuals preparing for professional careers. As higher education became a necessity in the 20th century, more middle-class families were committed to sending their children to college. However, the cost and admissions competition also increased dramatically. Although they are more affordable, community colleges, like other disruptive innovations, are viewed as lower quality options: “Too often community colleges are underfunded and underappreciated, lacking the resources they need to improve instruction, build ties with businesses, and adopt other reforms” (Office of the Press Secretary, 2009).

As the nation and the world confront a dramatically changing economic landscape, continuing education is viewed as a necessity for competing in today’s global marketplace. Community colleges may be the key to providing a new generation of American workers with the skills and education they need for jobs in the new economy. Typically, the vast majority of federal support for higher education has taken the form of student aid (e.g., Pell Grants, subsidized loans, etc.). In a departure from this approach, the Obama administration is again utilizing competitive grants for community colleges through its proposed American Graduation Initiative.

It will be interesting to see which innovations actually have a significant impact. If just one does, that may be enough. For, as Christensen, Horn, and Johnson observe, “It is rare for a disruption to appear in just one part of a commercial system without the rest of the system changing, too” (p. 123).

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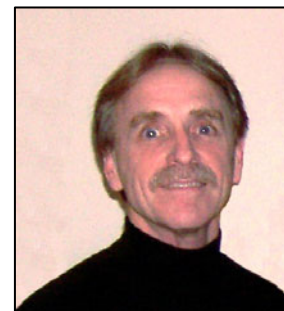


Special Report

Michigan's Call to Action: English Language Learners Count

By Dennis Terdy, Consultant, Center for Applied Linguistics

Despite the ongoing and deepening economic crisis in Michigan, where the recent unemployment rate jumped to 15 percent (as opposed to the country's average of 9.5 percent), and where all state agencies, including the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), were recently asked to take six unpaid furlough days between June and the Labor Day weekend, critical education work has been moving forward. MDE has relentlessly been shaping the education system to address those with the most intense needs. One of the foci has been on English language learners (ELLs).



Dennis Terdy

Great Lakes East's collaborative work with MDE's Office of School Improvement (OSI) began in early 2007. MDE was in the process of creating a comprehensive approach to ELLs in the state (see the [Spring 2008 e-newsletter](#), p. 2), especially targeting the capacity of ELL program directors and statewide professional development. One of the key elements of this approach was to develop and implement a five-year ELL strategic plan, mainly through the ongoing work of the ELL Advisory Committee. Great Lakes East has been engaged with the Committee and supporting its multiple meetings to move this plan forward.

Joining the Efforts

In September 2008, a new opportunity became available for Great Lakes East to provide a different impetus for the ELL work in Michigan through the award of the supplemental funding from the U.S. Department of Education. The new funding gave the Great Lakes East and MDE team an extra niche to extend its support across MDE—not just OSI, which is now divided into the Office of Improvement and Innovation and the Office of Field Services—and bring together forces to build a statewide system of support in regard to ELL student achievement and high school improvement. This article highlights some of the major accomplishments enabled through this new line of assistance.

Aside from the ongoing refinement and implementation of the ELL strategic plan, through OSI, new attention has been raised to increase visibility of ELLs across MDE. Joining the forces of OSI's ELL advisory committee with those of the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) ELL advisory committee became a timely endeavor. Initiated by MDE and supported by Great Lakes East, the two committees were combined to provide input on ELL services, as stipulated in the strategic ELL plan.

Is C+ Good Enough?

The cumulative conversations of the joint ELL Advisory Committee continued well into early spring 2009, reaching into other MDE offices. The Great Lakes East and OSI planning team continued to build on that effort and initiated a cross-office ELL dialogue on February 10–11, 2009. The overall focus for this meeting was "Quality Counts 2009: How ELLs Are Putting Michigan Schools to the Test," built upon the recently released *Education Week* publication *Quality Counts 2009*, which grades Michigan at C+ for its ELL achievement. The participants from eight different MDE offices focused on creating awareness activities related to ELLs across



MDE, building cross-office coordination, establishing a clear cross-office agenda for ELLs with the assistance from national ELL experts, and sharing research and examples of successful state-level practices from other states that address the accessibility and learning needs of ELLs. Representatives from the joint ELL Advisory Committee also were among the attendees.

At the meeting, Great Lakes East and national experts from the Assessment and Accountability Comprehensive Center and the Center for Applied Linguistics made presentations and facilitated discussions. The majority of the discussions focused around the *Quality Counts* results and their implications for Michigan. Of special attention was the relation of the *Quality Counts* issues and indicators to Michigan's K–12 achievement and the teaching profession. Resources and research insights were discussed with the participants related to the alignment and linkage between language and content assessments. The Great Lakes East and OSI planning team formed several working groups to provide more opportunities to learn about ELLs and dialogue with national experts as well as MDE colleagues. The working groups also addressed desired state outcomes and ways to identify and mobilize resources to improve ELL achievement well above the average.

Continuing the Dialogue

The February event sparked many in-depth conversations among the representatives of MDE offices. As a result, an MDE cross-office ELL Core Team was created to continue building the systems of support for ELLs in Michigan. In the follow-up meetings in March and May 2009, facilitated by Great Lakes East and OSI, several cross-office teams formed to better ensure that ELL issues were represented across MDE. Currently, the ELL Core Team meetings continue bimonthly and focus on key ELL themes with an overall goal of bringing a greater coordinated focus of ELL issues across MDE and new opportunities. In addition, these meetings will give varied offices an opportunity to view similar department issues as they are viewed through from the perspective of ELLs.

It is early to assess the overall impact of this recent supplemental effort, especially in creating a stronger accountability model for ELLs in Michigan. Yet with the establishment of the cross-office ELL Core Team and the initiation of regular team meetings, the role of ELL accountability issues are given an ongoing voice and visibility within the department. According to the OSI's Supervisor of Academic Support Linda Forward:

The cross-office collaboration has demonstrated that an incredible amount of positive energy regarding ELLs exists throughout the agency. There are proponents in every office willing to work together to enhance the educational opportunities for ELLs. As a result of this collaboration, eight different offices include ELLs on their work agendas and are engaged in finding ways to better serve the needs of these students. New initiatives regularly consider if there are any issues that need to be addressed to better meet the needs of ELLs and those who teach them. There is a new recognition that ELLs are the responsibility of all areas of the Department, not solely that of the Office of School Improvement.

Through the supplemental funding, Great Lakes East was able to support MDE in launching and building a long-term structure for an ELL support system as the department faces additional staff reductions, as well as increase visibility of ELLs across the MDE offices.



Focus on States

In this section, Great Lakes East state managers provide regular updates on current state plans undertaken by each state in the region with a specific focus on NCLB implementation efforts. The e-mail addresses of the state managers are included.



INDIANA

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School Improvement

The Indiana Institute for School Leadership Teams. The two-year institute completed its one-year anniversary in summer 2009 with the original Cohort I schools beginning their second year and the new Cohort II schools beginning their first year. Designed and supported by the Indiana Department of Education's (IDOE) Differentiated Learning and Title I area and Great Lakes East (led by Jayne Sowers, Ed.D., school and district improvement lead), the institute is established to counter the struggles of the urban principalship by offering a leadership team approach, providing ongoing support and mentoring, and affording extensive focused times outside of the school building to work together. The institute's components include the following:

- Ongoing, two-year assistance from an Indiana Distinguished Principal
- Summer Academy I and II—three days of focused work each summer
- School-Year Sessions—with all school leadership teams meeting together three times a year

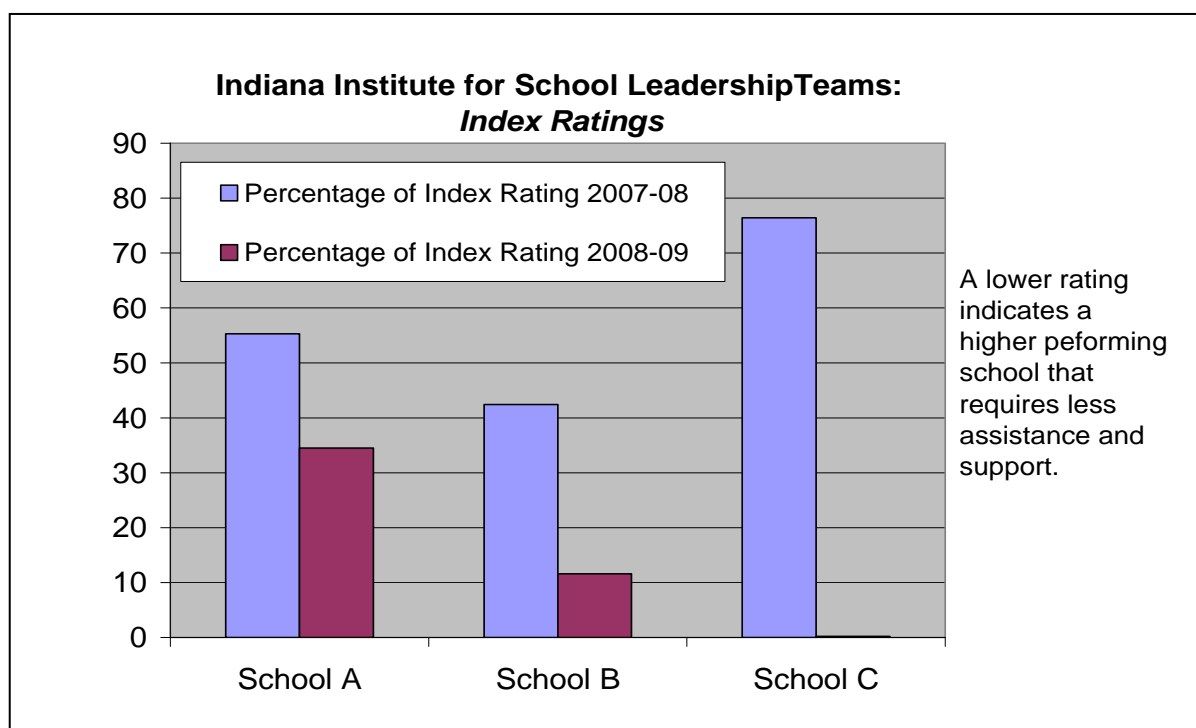
In addition, the institute's outcomes correspond to Indiana's Title I Theory of Action and adult learning theory. During each summer academy, three to five activities and processes allow for the school leadership teams to achieve the following outcomes:

- Understand and begin to implement the characteristics of a high-performing school leadership team focused solely on improving student learning.
- Develop a set of data findings by analyzing student and school data for all students and for student groups.
- Formulate a two-year school leadership team goal centered on improving student learning through instruction, assessment, and curriculum.
- Delineate a set of team tasks that when fully implemented will lead to the achievement of the two-year goal and begin to address those tasks at the Summer Academy.
- Increase knowledge and skills in specific areas related to improving student learning as gained through topical sessions, resources, and research provided, and through guidance from the Indiana Distinguished Principals.

Recently, both Cohort I and Cohort II participated in the Summer Academy process. For each cohort, the three-day event allowed for extensive amounts of time in their teams and working closely with their Distinguished Principals.



The Cohort I schools, participating in their second Summer Academy, presented and celebrated the improvement in their Indiana index ratings (see Table 1). Based on Indiana's Differentiated Accountability Model, the higher the index rating, the farther away the school is from making adequate yearly progress (AYP) and/or the more student groups are not making AYP. Thus, the school goal is to lower the index rating. As shown in Table 1, all three Cohort I schools made extensive progress in lowering their index rating.



The School Leadership Team members mentioned several key areas that they believe led to the increase in student learning: the use of data by all teachers to determine specific students' needs, additional time before and after school for tutoring the students who were closest to passing the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress–Plus (ISTEP+), and a newfound belief in high expectations for all students and staff. The School Leadership Teams specifically acknowledged their time and work with their Distinguished Principals as critical to the changes they have instituted.

Starting its first year of the Institute, the new Cohort II consists of nine teams in school improvement status from around the state. The Summer Academy in June 2009 was their first exposure to the institute and, according to the participants' evaluations, was a very positive experience. Remarks included the following: "I've never worked so hard, got so much accomplished and learned so much in 10+ years of being a teacher" and "The organization and guidance was much more than I expected." Other participants noted the "individualized assistance," the "positive assistance," and "the precise and targeted" information presented.

Both cohorts will continue to receive support from their Distinguished Principals throughout the year and will attend fall and spring sessions as a whole group to share and continue their work. The Institute for School Leadership Teams is one of several supports that Great Lakes East is assisting the Indiana Department of Education in providing to its schools in the highest levels of improvement.



MICHIGAN

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Teacher Quality

State Individual Professional Development Plans. With the individual professional development plan having been completed in June 2009, MDE staff from the Office of Professional Preparation Services are now nearing completion of an electronic version of the individual professional development plan template and associated support materials. Great Lakes East, with support from the American Institutes of Research, is assisting MDE and Western Michigan University staff in designing a field study of the individual professional development plan in three regions that reflect the demographic differences among Michigan districts. Concurrently, Great Lakes East and MDE are designing professional development to support mentors and beginning teachers in the field study. The field test will be conducted beginning in September of the 2009–10 school year.

State Teacher Preparation System Revision. Beginning in summer 2008, Great Lakes East staff worked with three MDE consultants (summer interns) to assist in a standards alignment project. The task was to examine alignment between Michigan's Grade Level Content Expectations, High School Content Expectations, Certification Standards for Elementary Teachers, and Professional Standards for Michigan Teachers. With this work now complete, Great Lakes East and the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality will begin to work with MDE and the Professional Standards Commission for Teachers to design a Michigan framework for excellence in teacher preparation in fall 2009.

High School

High School Redesign. In collaboration with MaryAlice Galloway, director of the MDE Office of Education Improvement and Innovation, Great Lakes East continues to cofacilitate MDE's cross-office, collaborative high school core team. During the May 2009 core team meeting, Great Lakes East shared the results of the March 2009 survey of the team and facilitated small- and large-group discussions to identify possibilities for use of the survey data and to determine next steps. As one of its goals, the survey identified team members' top priorities for high school redesign.

Subsequently, the June meeting focused on reviewing the most recent high-priority high school data. Based on the priorities identified, four subcommittees have been formed: the high school redesign strategic planning committee, the high school core team planning committee, the high school summit planning committee, and the high school work group committee. Great Lakes East will work with MDE to organize and cofacilitate these subcommittees in the upcoming months. In addition, at the June meeting, Linda Hecker, NCLB consultant for high-priority schools, provided an overview of Michigan's Statewide System of Support in order to increase core team members' understanding of the supports currently in place for all schools, including Title I high schools. Great Lakes East will work with the team members to explore opportunities to leverage the collaborative work of the Statewide System of Support Core Team and the High School Core Team to increase student achievement in Michigan's high schools.



Alternative High Schools. Great Lakes East and MDE worked with members of the Alternative Education Work Group to plan sessions for an Alternative Education Summer Institute on June 23, 2009. The institute was attended by 150 alternative education administrators and teachers from districts across the state. Deputy Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer Sally Vaughn welcomed the participants and shared information regarding the accomplishments of the work group during the past year. Bersheril Bailey, Great Lakes East senior state consultant, facilitated a panel discussion on “Maximizing Your Options for Alternative Ed Students.”

Other speakers represented a variety of MDE offices. Sam Sinicropi, consultant from the MDE Office of Education Improvement and Innovation, spoke to the group about MDE’s alternative education waiver application and approval process. MaryAlice Galloway, director of the Office of Education Improvement and Innovation, discussed seat time waivers, independent study, and online learning options, as well Michigan’s Ed Yes/MI-SAS accreditation changes. Paul Bielawski, special assistant at the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability, presented AYP and test reporting, including Superintendent Flanagan’s recent policy change related to test scores and alternative schools. Barb Fardell from MDE’s Office of Educational Technology provided participants with a wealth of information about free online resources that alternative high schools can use to differentiate instruction.

Great Lakes East will reconvene the Alternative Education Work Group meetings in September 2009 to further assist MDE in developing solutions to address the needs of alternative high school in the state.

Statewide System of Support

On May 17–18, 2009, Gary Appel, Great Lakes East state manager for Michigan, and Bersheril Bailey, Great Lakes East senior state consultant, participated in a Statewide System of Support retreat hosted by MDE and the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA). The purpose of the retreat was to celebrate the successes of the current SSOS and to begin to reimagine the delivery model. Among the participants were representatives from MDE’s Office of the Improvement and Innovation, MAISA, Michigan State University, five intermediate school districts, and three high-priority school principals and their coaches. At the retreat, Great Lakes East shared information highlights from a recent Center on Innovation & Improvement publication titled *Coherence in Statewide Systems of Support*. The publication provides many state examples around the country that focus on building the capacity of districts to work with their schools in corrective action. To help MDE reimagine its SSOS delivery model, Great Lakes East emphasized this coherence and provided information on what other states are doing. The two-day retreat ended with a list of 12 recommendations from the group that will be shared with the SSOS Core Team for discussion and further consideration.

Michigan was one of nine states attending the Center for Innovation & Improvement’s Academy of Pacesetter States, held July 19–24. Other states participating in the academy were Alaska, Arkansas, Idaho, Illinois, Louisiana, Montana, Oklahoma, and Virginia. Each state team included a representative from the regional comprehensive center serving its state. Participants representing Michigan included Bersheril Bailey, Great Lakes East; Linda Hecker, Michael Nauss, and Abigail Hilgendorf, MDE Office of Improvement and Innovation; and Elizabeth VanDeusen-MacLeod and Laska Creagh, MAISA. The purpose of the academy was to provide training, consultation, and support for state teams to develop skilled experts in the areas of system



leaders, change agents, and instructional specialist. State teams left the academy with specific plans and recommendations to take back to state superintendents for approval. Great Lakes East will help MDE facilitate follow-up session with the Michigan SSOS Core Team to work on the plans and recommendations.

English Language Learners. As part of wrapping up the implementation of the supplemental ELL work in Michigan, the MDE cross-office ELL Core Team, representing multiple MDE offices, convened for its second follow-up meeting on May 13, 2009. At this meeting, the core team clarified its overall goals and selected ELL issues to address in its upcoming quarterly meetings. Even though the supplemental funding ended on June 30, 2009, the core team continues its efforts through the ongoing support from MDE Office of Field Services (Linda Forward) and Great Lakes East. The team met again on July 10, 2009, to discuss the results of a recent MDE assessment study and its implications for the state's ELL population. Great Lakes East and its subcontractor, the Center for Applied Linguistics, facilitated each of these meetings. The ELL Core Team will continue to meet quarterly. The upcoming September meeting will focus on the state's budget process and its impact on policy and program development.

Aside from the ELL Core Team efforts, Great Lakes East continued to support and facilitate the joint ELL Advisory Committee, representing the Office of School Improvement (now the Office of Field Services) and the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA). The committee consists of members representing ELL programs throughout the state. On May 18–19, 2009, the committee met to address three priority topics within its ongoing work groups: institutions of higher education, professional development, and the English Language Proficiency Assessment (Michigan's ELL assessment instrument). Candace Harper, Ph.D., associate professor of ESL/Bilingual Education at University of Florida, was the guest speaker. She provided an overview of Florida's extensive and in-depth experience in providing ELL credentialing and professional development to teachers throughout the state. Two months later, on July 19–21, 2009, MDE convened a summer retreat of the ELL Advisory Committee to develop the next steps for the current MDE five-year strategic ELL plan. This plan will provide MDE with a framework for addressing ELL issues related to three categories: professional development, assessment, and administration through 2014. Dennis Terdy, a Center for Applied Linguistics consultant representing Great Lakes East, facilitated this event. A total of 14 committee members and three MDE staff representing the Office of Field Services and OEAA participated in this 2½-day retreat.

Last, as a major MDE ELL capacity-building effort and planned during much of this past year, Great Lakes East subcontractor the Center for Applied Linguistics provided Sheltered Observation Instruction Protocol (SIOP) training-of-trainers to 15 Michigan educators. The event took place from June 28 through July 2, 2009, with Center for Applied Linguistics representatives Sandra Gutierrez and Dennis Terdy providing the training. The trained participants will assist the Center for Applied Linguistics in three regional SIOP sessions taking place in July and August 2009. Coordinated through MDE, this capacity-building professional development activity has the long-term goal of providing expanded SIOP training locally through this newly created network of Michigan SIOP trainers.



OHIO

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Assessment and Accountability

Data Support Systems and the Ohio Improvement Process. The Ohio Improvement Process depends upon connected and aligned tools across its four stages. This alignment is now very close to reality with the conversion of the tools to a Web-based environment. With this conversion, the Decision Framework moves from an Excel spreadsheet to a Web-based tool. As an online tool, available data will automatically flow from the Data Driven Decisions for Academic Achievement (D3A2) data warehouse into the Decision Framework. The use of these tools enables fidelity to the improvement process and supports consistency in using data to generate decisions about how districts should spend their time, energy, and resources to make improvements in student performance. Users will be able to view this data in the form of colored graphs; for example, reading proficiency data by grade level is presented this way. District leadership teams will be able to move through this online environment and make decisions about levels of concern. In the end, a profile that reflects decisions made becomes the needs-assessment portion of the Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP).

From the CCIP, district goals and strategies move electronically to populate the Implementation Management and Monitoring Tool used by buildings to develop specific action steps at the building level. The tool also is used to create a plan for monitoring adult implementation indicators and progress indicators of student performance.

The Ohio Improvement Process tools—the district and building Web-based Decision Framework Tools (stage 1), CCIP (stage 2), and Implementation Management and Monitoring Tool (stage 3)—are now undergoing a quality assurance process by state-level design team members, Great Lakes East, and others at ODE. These tools were demonstrated to the state-level design team on July 22 and should be ready for use by districts and buildings this fall.

Collaborative Assessment System Work Group. The Collaborative Assessment System work group (composed of ODE staff, regional providers, district and building staff, and Great Lakes East) is operating under the following assumptions:

- A single annual assessment of student performance is not sufficient to improve instructional practice and student achievement.
- An aligned and coordinated assessment system that can be used to guide, inform, and improve instructional practice and decision making on a districtwide basis is needed.
- A collaborative assessment system should permit shared learning and improve instructional practice among and between teacher-based teams, building leadership teams, and district leadership teams.

The work group has had two meetings: May 18, 2009, and July 2, 2009. The objectives for these meetings were as follows: continue developing a shared understanding of how collaborative assessment systems can be designed and implemented; reach consensus on a working framework and nomenclature for the Ohio Improvement Process collaborative assessment systems; and finalize priority activities to leverage



implementation of such a system. The team has reached consensus on a working framework and has finalized some priority activities that can focus the work of this group. RMC Research Corporation representative Karen Sanders (Great Lakes East subcontractor) facilitates these meetings. The National Center on Educational Outcomes serves as an advisor to the group as does the Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing.

Credit Flexibility Implementation. The numerous stakeholder engagement meetings, facilitated early in the year by Great Lakes East, informed Ohio's credit flexibility policy as well as the credit flexibility plan adopted by the Ohio State Board of Education. These stakeholders (like the Ohio School Board Association) will continue to inform and support credit flexibility implementation. The credit flexibility plan calls for state guidance to early-adoption districts. This guidance may come in the form of model policy language that could be adopted by local boards, new rules that help overcome systemic barriers, and approved assessments to demonstrate competence. Guidance from the state, support from stakeholders, and sharing of what works among early-adoption districts require a platform and an approach to building a community.

Tori Cirks (Great Lakes East) recognized that the communities of practice approach and shared work platform used by the IDEA Partnership also would support credit flexibility implementation. As a result, on May 29, 2009, Cirks organized a conference call with Joanne Cashman of the IDEA Partnership, ODE, and Great Lakes East to begin exploring how the communities of practice approach might work for credit flexibility implementation. This conversation led to several phone conferences with greater cross-office coordination at ODE. As a result, ODE plans to proceed with the development of the communities of practice approach to support implementation of its credit flexibility plan. Great Lakes East will work with ODE, the IDEA Partnership, and other partners to form this community.

Ohio Performance Assessments and International Assessment and Accountability Systems. In June 2009, Nick Pinchok (Great Lakes East) with assistance from Arie van der Ploeg (Learning Point Associates) has completed a draft of a technical research brief titled *A Brief on Performance-Based Assessment: Technical Considerations From an International Perspective*. The purpose of this research brief is to provide Stan Heffner, associate superintendent of the Center for Curriculum and Assessment at ODE, with a technical rationale for using performance assessments as part of a reshaped assessment and accountability system in Ohio. Together with Ray Pecheone (Stanford University School Redesign Network) and Stephen Dackin (superintendent of Reynoldsburg City Schools), Pinchok and Heffner gave a panel presentation (moderated by van der Ploeg) at the Council of Chief State School Officers' national conference on student assessment held June 21–24, 2009, titled "Building Performance Assessments to Lead the Rebuilding of Ohio's Assessment and Curriculum." As a follow-up, Great Lakes East has been invited to attend a Performance Assessment Pilot Project Site Leaders meeting on August 4, 2009, in Columbus, Ohio.

State Systems of Support

Ohio Improvement Process (OIP)—Stage 3. The Stage 3 subcommittee, facilitated by Sheryl Poggi (Great Lakes East consultant), has met two times (May 20 and June 17, 2009) in the last quarter to ensure that implementation and monitoring processes and collaborative structures are clearly described and aligned with Stages 1 and 2 of the OIP and also are aligned to the Ohio Leadership Development Framework.



Some questions emerged within Stage 3 about how to build the capacity of the state system of support to create the necessary collaborative structures and implementation and monitoring processes at the district, building, and data team levels (teacher-based teams):

- How does the state system of support help districts and buildings create structures and processes for collective work that enables a culture where adults work, learn, and solve problems together?
- What should the regional providers do to help districts and buildings institute and maintain a culture of collective discussion and problem solving focused on teaching and learning?
- What does a highly functional data team look like?
- How are data used at each level of the system to monitor the degree of implementation and to make decisions about what is and is not working in changing adult practice and student performance?

As a follow-up to the Norfolk, Virginia, site visit in April 2009, ODE will work with Cathy Lassiter, Ed.D., executive director of middle schools at Norfolk Public Schools, to lead data team training on August 27–28, 2009, designed for regional facilitators. This training focuses on how teacher-based teams function and how they use data, especially common formative assessments. Regional facilitators will spend time thinking concretely about their role in instituting and maintaining the necessary structures and ongoing support of teacher-based teams. The training also intersects with the focus of the Collaborative Assessment System Work Group, which grapples with how best to move the system toward a systematic use of collaboratively developed common formative assessments and quarterly or interim assessments to improve instruction and monitor student progress.

The other major focus of Stage 3 and the OIP has been ongoing planning and preparation by the State-Level Design Team to facilitate the training of more than 500 State Support Team members and educational service center (ESC) staff on September 1–3, 2009. The State-Level Design Team has taken the lead in planning this training with the leadership of Sheryl Poggi (Great Lakes East consultant) and Claudette Rasmussen (Great Lakes East). This team met on June 18 and July 22–23, 2009, to help develop a working agenda for September and to plan presentations and activities around five core training components within Stage 3: overview, principles, and roles; systemic and systematic plan implementation; monitoring systems; collaborative structures; and monitoring indicators. On August 18–19, 2009, the State-Level Design Team will meet along with recommended individuals from ESCs who will form the training team for September.

One of the ongoing challenges of building the capacity of the state system of support to effectively facilitate the OIP with districts and buildings has been to ensure consistent quality and fidelity to the process among all regional providers and to build a more sustainable infrastructure across the state that supports capacity building. In response to this challenge, ODE is transitioning training and ongoing support of OIP facilitators from centralized trainings to regionally based trainings led by State-Level Design Team members and quad leads. Great Lakes East will help to monitor this transition to ensure fidelity to the process and a level of consistent quality across regions.

Overall, the OIP is coming together with its many moving parts: The Decision Framework, comprehensive continuous improvement process (CCIP), and Implementation Management and Monitoring Tool will automatically move data and decisions made by districts and buildings along the stages of the OIP; resources like the OIP Facilitator Guide and OIP website are nearly complete and aligned to the Leadership Development Framework; and the state system of support (OIP facilitator network) is growing and plans are in place to ensure



a sustainable, high-quality system of support. In addition, assessment work and data team training will be critical assets in transforming teaching and learning as well as building cultures. Year 5 of the Great Lakes East work with ODE will be critical in making these moving parts function well together and to realize the working theory of change that systemic and systematic use of data tools, collaborative structures that support effective leadership practices, and focused and aligned planning, implementation, and monitoring processes will yield significant and ongoing changes in adult practice and student performance across Ohio.

A Special “Thank You” Note

With this newsletter update, Great Lakes East would like to say “farewell” to Stephen Barr as he retires from ODE. Stephen is the self-described “conscience of the OIP.” As important as his role was in keeping the development of this process moving in the right direction, Stephen also was visionary in his conception of how this process might work and was a remarkable systems thinker and planner. We will miss his leadership and sense of humor. At the same time, we look forward to continued work with Deb Telfer and other highly talented and dedicated people at ODE and across the regional network.

In the News

The following articles were selected to provide easy access to news and publications addressing the key education topics within each Great Lakes East state and across the nation during the past quarter.



INDIANA

Education Entrepreneurs Bring Innovative Ideas to Public Education—Indiana Department of Education, July 30, 2009

http://www.doe.in.gov/news/2009/07-July/education_entrepreneurs.html

“During the board’s monthly meeting, ... The Mind Trust’s Education Entrepreneur Fellowship was recognized in the ‘Spotlight on Learning’ for its innovative approach to developing or expanding education initiatives across the country.”

Proposed Rule Revisions for Educator Preparation and Accountability—Indiana Department of Education, July 29, 2009

<http://www.doe.in.gov/news/2009/07-July/REPA.html>

Increasing teachers’ content knowledge and instructional skills to improve student achievement in meeting state goals is just one of the reform goals that IDOE has proposed to improve teacher quality. The proposed changes would go into effect July 1, 2010.

Bennett Says Indiana Well-Positioned to Compete for Race to the Top Funds—Indiana Department of Education, July 24, 2009

<http://www.doe.in.gov/news/2009/07-July/race.html>

“ ‘It’s called a “Race” for a reason, and from the beginning, we approached this competition with a sense of urgency,’ Bennett said. ‘The Race to the Top initiative is designed to be an equation-changer in education. Some thought we were moving too quickly, but today we have proof that it’s paying off. Already, Indiana is aggressively attacking the criteria announced today by President Obama. We’re right on track to be among the winners competing for this funding.’ ”



Listening and Learning Tour in Indianapolis—U.S. Department of Education, July 21, 2009

<http://www.edgovblogs.org/duncan/2009/07/listening-and-learning-tour-in-indianapolis/>

“Secretary Duncan’s ‘Listening and Learning’ tour stopped in Indiana to hear from a broad range of stakeholders about education in Indiana and their thoughts [on] education reform. Peter Groff, Director of the Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, represented the Secretary in the discussions and events around the city of Indianapolis.”

It’s Time for Indiana to Get Serious About Math Achievement—Indiana Department of Education, June 26, 2009

http://www.doe.in.gov/news/2009/06-June/math_achievement.html

“We brought together national experts and key decision-makers from across the state this week for the first-ever Indiana Math Summit. The summit is the first—and only the first—in a series of steps we are taking as a state to raise awareness about the importance of math, to reach a consensus around what works to improve math learning, and to create a sense of urgency that now is the time for change in classrooms and communities across Indiana.”

Department of Education Completes ISTEP+ Review—Indiana Department of Education, May 29, 2009

http://www.doe.in.gov/news/2009/05-May/istep_review.html

“Following receipt of a significant number of concerns raised by educators regarding the open-ended portion of the spring ISTEP+ exam, Bennett ordered a comprehensive review of the test itself and the process leading up to it.” The review found that “out of 1,455 total testing items reviewed, 35 items (less than 2.5 percent) were found to be substantially out of alignment with the associated standard. Twenty-five of these items were open-ended items and the remaining 10 were multiple choice.”



MICHIGAN

High School Writing and Math Scores Improve on Michigan Merit Exam—Michigan Department of Education, July 14, 2009

http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-37818_34785-218083--,00.html

“High school writing and math scores have shown an increase, according to results for the Michigan Merit Exam (MME). . . . Over the past three years, the percentage of Michigan public school 11th graders who scored at the proficient or advanced levels in writing improved from 40 percent in 2007, to 41 percent in 2008, to 44 percent in 2009.”

Flanagan Announces Statewide Challenge to Help Prevent Students From Dropping Out—Michigan Department of Education, June 30, 2009

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Dropout_Challenge_284523_7.pdf

“State Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Flanagan . . . announced a statewide *Superintendent’s Dropout Challenge* to Michigan’s 4,000 public schools that could impact nearly 60,000 students at-risk of dropping out of school.”

State Reps Urge Quick Action on Failing Schools—*Detroit News*, June 30, 2009

<http://detnews.com/article/20090630/SCHOOLS/906300393/1026/local/State-reps-urge-quick-action-on-failing-schools>

“Three state representatives . . . called on the Senate to act quickly on legislation targeting failing schools. The plan, which passed the House late last week, creates new standards and restructuring options for schools to ensure Michigan students are prepared for the 21st-century global economy.”

State Superintendent’s Podcast: Reform From the Classroom Level—Michigan Department of Education, June 11, 2009

http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-37818_45256-216470--,00.html

“State Superintendent Mike Flanagan discusses how education reform can be driven from the classroom level, through teachers who know first-hand that thoughtful innovations can dramatically improve student achievement.”



More Than \$1 Billion in Recovery Funds Now Available for Michigan to Save Teaching Jobs and Drive Education Reform—U.S. Department of Education, June 3, 2009

<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2009/06/06032009a.html>

“To date, Michigan has received \$421 million in education stimulus funds—representing a combination of funding for Title I, IDEA, Vocational Rehabilitation Grants, Independent Living Grants and Impact Aid.... Michigan will be eligible to apply for another \$525 million this fall.”

OHIO

More Than \$1 Billion in Recovery Funds Now Available for Ohio to Save Teaching Jobs and Drive Education Reform—U.S. Department of Education, June 10, 2009

<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2009/06/06102009b.html>

“To date, Ohio has received \$432 million in education stimulus funds—representing a combination of funding for Title I, IDEA, Vocational Rehabilitation Grants and Independent Living Grants.... Ohio will be eligible to apply for another \$590 million this fall.”

State Board of Education Elects New Leadership—Ohio Department of Education, June 8, 2009

<https://webapp1.ode.state.oh.us/cncs/view.asp?id=644642696414519757>

“The State Board of Education ... elected a new president and vice president. Deborah Cain was elected to fulfill the term of Board President Jennifer L. Sheets, who announced her resignation from the Board in May. Ann Womer Benjamin was elected vice president to replace Cain.”



ELSEWHERE IN THE NATION

Recent Education News

NCATE Offers Multiple Reaccreditation Paths—*Education Week*, July 13 (updated), 2009

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2009/06/22/36revision.h28.html?tkn=UNBFX6qNGUzbPQYE1zFYT7luE8em%2Bp6RSnSP>

“Education schools will no longer be forced to follow the same paths to reaccreditation. As part of the first major overhaul of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education’s system in nearly a decade, schools might commit to working toward a higher level of performance on NCATE’s six standards. Alternatively, institutions can propose and undertake a major research project or partner with a school district to further the knowledge base on effective teacher preparation.”

Common Core State Standards Development Work Group and Feedback Group Announced—National Governors Association, July 1, 2009

<http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.6c9a8a9ebc6ae07eee28aca9501010a0/?vgnextoid=60e20e4d3d132210VgnVCM1000005e00100aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=759b8f2005361010VgnVCM1000001a01010aRCRD>

“The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) ... announced the names of the experts serving on the Common Core State Standards Development Work Group and Feedback Group and provided more detailed information on the college and career ready standards development process.”



U.S. Department of Education Study Finds That Good Teaching Can Be Enhanced With New Technology—U.S. Department of Education, June 26, 2009

<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2009/06/06262009.html>

"[The] U.S. Department of Education today released an analysis of controlled studies comparing online and face-to-face instruction 'This new report reinforces that effective teachers need to incorporate digital content into everyday classes and consider open-source learning management systems, which have proven cost effective in school districts and colleges nationwide,' said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan."

'Response to Intervention' in Math Seen As Challenging—*Education Week*, June 16, 2009

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2009/06/17/35rti.h28.html?tkn=TRLFLQFV0ppzfgEXjwiCrFqPy/F7zcXvmPLf>

"The RTI practice guide for math, released in April, as well as a practice guide for reading instruction issued in March, were the topics of a June 10 forum hosted by the [What Works Clearinghouse](#). ... Educators at last week's event said that fitting math into an RTI framework is hard, but that they believe it is now vital to improving math performance for struggling students."

"Innovation, Motherhood and Apple Pie": A Conversation With Top Researcher Russ Whitehurst—Public School Insights, June 15, 2009

<http://www.publicschoolinsights.org/does-slow-and-steady-win-race-conversation-top-researcher-grover-russ-whitehurst>

"On June 4th, we praised him for questioning some education reformers' blind approval of innovation for innovation's sake. (See his compelling essay, "[Innovation, Motherhood and Apple Pie](#).") Whitehurst recently joined us by telephone to describe his concerns in greater detail."

Forty-Nine States and Territories Join Common Core State Standards Initiative—Council of Chief State School Officers, June 1, 2009

http://www.ccsso.org/whats_new/press_releases/13359.cfm

"The goal is to have a common core of state standards that states can voluntarily adopt. States may choose to include additional standards beyond the common core as long as the common core represents at least 85 percent of the state's standards in English-language arts and mathematics."

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

Department of Education to Accelerate \$11.37 Billion in Stimulus Funds—U.S. Department of Education, August 3, 2009

<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2009/08/08032009.html>

"U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan ... announced that the Department will accelerate stimulus spending by making \$11.37 billion in Title I, IDEA, and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) funding, as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), available to states one month early to help save jobs and drive reform."

ARRA Webinar Resources Now Available—U.S. Department of Education, July 27, 2009

<http://www.ed.gov/news/events/arra-webinar.html>

"On Monday, July 27, Deputy Secretary of Education Tony Miller hosted a webinar for governors, Chief State School Officers, state legislators, mayors, superintendents, school board members, education association leaders, and other stakeholders, outlining more than \$9 billion in new initiatives for states and school districts, including the \$4.35 billion "Race to the Top" Fund. The ... resources are available from that webinar."



President Obama, U.S. Secretary of Education Duncan Announce National Competition to Advance School Reform—U.S. Department of Education, July 24, 2009

<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2009/07/07242009.html>

“President Barack Obama and U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan today announced that states leading the way on school reform will be eligible to compete for \$4.35 billion in Race to the Top competitive grants to support education reform and innovation in classrooms. Between the 2009 budget and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), more than \$10 billion in grant money will be available to states and districts that are driving reform.”

Non-Regulatory Guidance on Title I, Part A Waivers—U.S. Department of Education, July 2009

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/title-i-waiver.doc>

“The purpose of this guidance is to provide comprehensive information on how to request a waiver of specific statutory and regulatory provisions of Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). The guidance does not impose any requirements beyond those included in the ESEA, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), and other applicable laws and regulations.”

States’ and Localities’ Current and Planned Uses of Funds While Facing Fiscal Stresses—U.S. Government Accountability Office, July 2009

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d09829.pdf>

“This report, the second in response to a mandate under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act), addresses the following objectives: (1) selected states’ and localities’ uses of Recovery Act funds, (2) the approaches taken by the selected states and localities to ensure accountability for Recovery Act funds, and (3) states’ plans to evaluate the impact of the Recovery Act funds they received.”

Stimulus Tensions Simmer—U.S. Department of Education, July 13 (updated), 2009

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2009/06/30/36stim-manage.h28.html?tkn=NWQFu3pZc8R8xhWvMI%2F7fBCFGcNSjCLFs1yp>

“The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is clear: States are on the hook for advancing education improvement goals spelled out in the law as a condition for receiving up to \$100 billion in economic-stimulus aid to education. But school districts are the ones that must decide how to spend most of that aid—including hefty, one-time increases for Title I and special education funding—and tensions already are starting to emerge.”

New Guidance for Recipient Reporting Released—Recovery.gov, June 22, 2009

http://www.recovery.gov/?q=node/579#TB_inline?height=240&width=400&inlineId=tb_external

“On June 22, 2009, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) published Implementing Guidance for the Reports on Use of Funds Pursuant to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (“Recovery Act”). This guidance implements the reporting requirements included in Section 1512 of the Recovery Act for recipients of grants, loans, and other forms of assistance.”

Duncan Offers Stimulus Funds for States to Develop Rigorous Assessments Linked to Common Standards—U.S. Department of Education, June 15, 2009

<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2009/06/06152009a.html>

“U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced last night that the Department of Education will commit up to \$350 million of the \$4.35 billion Race to the Top Fund to support states in the creation of rigorous assessments linked to the internationally benchmarked common standards being developed by states.”



Resources

This section provides current resources and research available from regional comprehensive centers, national content centers, regional educational laboratories, and other technical assistance providers.

Toward the Structural Transformation of Schools: Innovations in Staffing—Learning Point Associates, August 2009

<http://www.learningpt.org/expertise/educatorquality/resources/publications/InnovationsInStaffing.pdf>

“To harness the opportunities for large-scale reform, it is the position of Learning Point Associates that states should lead the structural transformation of schooling, beginning with revolutionizing how they think about, prepare, license, deploy, and support educators. This analysis advocates for differentiated staffing and cites research, examples, and case studies.”

Snapshots of Indiana’s Full-Day Kindergarten Programs Before and After the State’s Funding Increase for the Program—REL Midwest at Learning Point Associates, July 2009

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/pdf/REL_2009013.pdf

“This technical brief describes Indiana’s full-day kindergarten enrollment patterns before and after the legislation (in 2006/07 and 2007/08) both in the state at large and in individual school corporations (equivalent to school districts) for all kindergarten students and disaggregated by student and school characteristics.”

Using ARRA Funds to Improve Teacher Effectiveness and Equitable Distribution: An Interactive Mapping Tool Progress—National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, July 2009

<http://www.tqsource.org/arra/>

“Modeled on a subway map, the tool is designed to guide conversations between regional comprehensive center (RCC) and state education agency (SEA) staff on the strategic use of funds appropriated in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 to improve teacher effectiveness and equitable distribution.”

Achievement Gaps: How Black and White Students in Public Schools Perform in Mathematics and Reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress—National Center for Educational Statistics, July 2009

<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/gaps/>

“[The report] provides detailed information on the size of the achievement gaps between Black and White students at both the national and state level and how those achievement gaps have changed over time. Most of the data in this report is derived from the results of the 2007 main NAEP assessments, and is supplemented with data from the long-term trend assessments.”

America’s Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being—Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, July 2009

<http://childstats.gov/americaschildren/index.asp>

“*America’s Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2009* is a compendium of indicators illustrating both the promises and the difficulties confronting our Nation’s young people. The report presents 40 key indicators on important aspects of children’s lives. ... This year’s report continues to present key indicators grouped by the seven sections identified in the restructured 10th anniversary report (2007): family and social environment, economic circumstances, health care, physical environment and safety, behavior, education, and health. [The Education] section presents key indicators of how well children are learning and progressing from early childhood through postsecondary school.”

A Multistate Review of Professional Teaching Standards—REL West, July 2009

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/west/pdf/REL_2009075.pdf

“This review of teaching standards in six states—California, Florida, Illinois, North Carolina, Ohio, and Texas—focuses on the structure, target audience, and selected content of the standards to inform California’s revision of its teaching standards.”



Professional Learning for Culturally Responsive Teaching—Equity Alliance at Arizona State University, June 2009

http://www.equityallianceasu.org/sites/default/files/Website_files/exemplarFINAL.pdf

“Much professional learning research and practice still omits discussion about cultural considerations. At times, the need for understanding the cultural nature of teaching and learning is noted without in-depth analysis about how culture mediates student and teacher classroom interactions and learning processes. This practitioner brief is designed to explore a missing dimension of professional learning: Culturally Responsive Teaching.”

The Condition of Education 2009—National Center for Education Statistics, May 28, 2009

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2009081>

“The report presents 46 indicators on the status and condition of education. The indicators represent a consensus of professional judgment on the most significant national measures of the condition and progress of education for which accurate data are available.”

The State of Learning Disabilities—National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2009

<http://www.ncld.org/images/stories/OnCapitolHill/PolicyRelatedPublications/stateofd/stateofd2009.pdf>

“Never before has a learning disabilities (LD) organization provided a comprehensive report on the status of individuals with LD and provided a data-based perspective of LD in the context of education reform. [The report is offered] to policy makers, education professionals, media, parents and others to ensure that there is access to key LD data and expand awareness about what LD is and who the condition impacts.”

Calendar of Events

For additional listings, check the Great Lakes East website for the [Calendar of Events](#).

AUGUST 2009

Date:	August 20	Topic:	English Learners and the Language Arts
Location:	Online	Audience:	Teacher leaders, principals, and district administrators
Format:	Webinar	Sponsor:	SchoolsMovingUp at WestEd

SEPTEMBER 2009

Dates:	September 24–25	Topic:	RTI Innovations 2009: Skill Up Before You Scale Up
Location:	Salt Lake City, UT	Audience:	Anyone implementing or supporting the implementation of response to intervention (RTI) practices: principals, general education teachers, special education teachers, RTI coaches, school psychologists, school counselors, school social workers, reading specialists, speech and language pathologists, educational consultants, central office administrators, state department personnel, and professional development coordinators
Format:	Conference	Sponsor:	Utah Personnel Development Center



OCTOBER 2009

Dates:	October 1–2	Topic:	Next Generation Assessment and Accountability Systems
Location:	Portsmouth, NH	Audience:	Educational researchers, policymakers, and practitioners
Format:	Conference	Sponsors:	Center for Assessment and WestEd
Dates:	October 5–6	Topic:	Envisioning a 21st Century Learning Organization: Creating a Common Vision for Success
Location:	Lisle, IL	Audience:	District and school leadership teams, administrators, school board members, central office staff, district and school improvement teams, teacher librarians, teachers, technology specialists, school counselors, learning supports staff, parents, and community members
Format:	Academy (Invitation only)	Sponsor:	Learning Point Associates
Dates:	October 5–6	Topic:	Improving Outcomes for English Language Learners: Oral Language and Literacy Learning Across the Curriculum
Location:	Austin, TX	Audience:	Instructional leaders in state and regional agencies, school districts, schools, colleges of education, and publishing companies
Format:	Conference	Sponsors:	Center for Research on the Educational Achievement and Teaching of English Language Learners (CREATE) in collaboration with University of Houston, California State University–Long Beach, Center for Applied Linguistics, Harvard University, University of Texas–Austin, and University of California–Berkeley
Dates:	October 15–16	Topic:	Educator Compensation: Performance Pay, Pensions, and Promising Practices
Location:	Chicago, IL	Audience:	State education agencies, local education agencies, state government and staff, organizations that focus on teacher quality, teacher organizations, and educator pension systems
Format:	Meeting	Sponsor:	REL Midwest at Learning Point Associates
Dates:	October 28–30	Topic:	4th Annual What Works Conference: “Beyond Highly Qualified: The Development and Distribution of Highly Effective Teachers and Leaders”
Location:	Washington, DC	Audience:	Comprehensive centers, state education agencies, and organizations committed to supporting and enhancing educator quality
Format:	Conference (Invitation only)	Sponsor:	National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality



UPCOMING EVENTS

Date:	December 11	Topic:	<u>Successful Strategies for Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Language Learners in the Elementary Grades</u>
Location:	Grand Rapids, MI	Audience:	Teachers, administrators, and curriculum directors who work with English language learners (ELLs) in Michigan
Format:	Meeting	Sponsor:	REL Midwest at Learning Point Associates

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