

links

Litke, Wood Win Presidential Awards

Web administrator Brian Litke and information associate Lacy Wood were honored by CEO Wes Hoover during the 2004 SEDL holiday party. Litke received the Edwin Hindsman Award, which is presented annually in recognition of excellence in service to children, while Wood received the Rogers L. Barton Award, given for work in education research and development that has contributed significantly to the field.

Litke joined SEDL in October 1996 as a training specialist. He quickly proved himself a valuable employee, establishing SEDL's intranet and becoming the administrator of SEDL's public Web site in November 1997. Litke received his BA in English from the University of Texas at Austin and is currently working on his master's in computer information systems from St. Edward's University.

"Brian has enabled all of SEDL to better serve children by building a high-quality electronic link to the outside world," said Hoover. "We could not work nearly as effectively nor reach nearly as many of our primary clients without a substantial Web presence."

"I am very honored to receive the Edwin Hindsman award for 2004," said Litke. "As I



Web administrator Brian Litke and information associate Lacy Wood were given the presidential awards at the 2004 SEDL holiday party.

reflect on the work of the past year, I am reminded that each project involved many SEDL staff from across the institution. I feel lucky to have worked with so many different staff members at SEDL. The thing that energizes me most about working here is that we are a learning community; we share knowledge and ideas with each other all the time. I look forward to the new year at SEDL, to learning new skills, and to partnering with staff to

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Presidential Awards, continued

support our successful projects as well as new services for our clients in the future.”

Lacy began working at SEDL in December 1997. She began as an information specialist before being promoted to an information associate. Lacy currently works with SEDL’s Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) program and the National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools. She holds a BA in history from Southwestern University and a master’s in library and information science from the University of Texas at Austin.

“Lacy has developed and is providing high-quality accessible information through SEDL’s national databases on comprehensive school reform, smaller learning communities, and Reading First. In addition, Lacy has played a major role in establishing the research database that supports SEDL’s

research annotations and syntheses under its national leadership area of family and community involvement in student learning,” Hoover said. “These high-quality tools have helped many educators understand the dimensions of these school improvement efforts and have helped build a national reputation for SEDL as the provider of them.”

“I am honored to be recognized for my work in developing information tools to support federal grant programs and the National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools,” said Wood. “Developing databases for these national projects has allowed me to work with researchers and state coordinators across the United States to provide accessible information to support school improvement efforts. It was especially meaningful for me to receive this award with Brian because he and I have worked in partnership on many of these projects over several years.” ■

Accessible IT Projects Focus on Technology for All Students

SEDL, the Disability Law Resource Project, and the New Mexico Technology Assistance Program are pleased to announce an initiative that promotes successful use of accessible information technology (IT). Accessible IT helps all students—including those with diverse abilities and those with disabilities—reach high levels of achievement.

Two projects compose the initiative: the Collaborative Development Project and the Promising Practices Project.

The Collaborative Development Project will offer technical assistance and training on purchasing and implementing accessible IT to a limited number of schools. Technical assistance will include help in development of universally accessible computer labs, accessible Web pages to deliver instructional information, a process and policy for procuring accessible hardware, and a process and policy for evaluating the accessibility of video and multimedia projects used in instruction.

The Promising Practices Project helps spread the word about successful IT among educators by promoting schools with promising practices already in place. Such practices may include universally accessible school computer labs, classrooms, and facilities; development and adoption of a policy that includes accessible IT specifications; teachers’ use of technology that addresses the needs of students with disabilities; and a school’s practice that reflects collaborative effort among school personnel to address accessibility.

For more information about the Collaborative Development Project, contact DLRP director Wendy Wilkinson at wendy@bcm.tmc.edu. For more information about the Promising Practices Project, contact SEDL communications assistant Stephanie Weaver at sweaver@sedl.org. ■

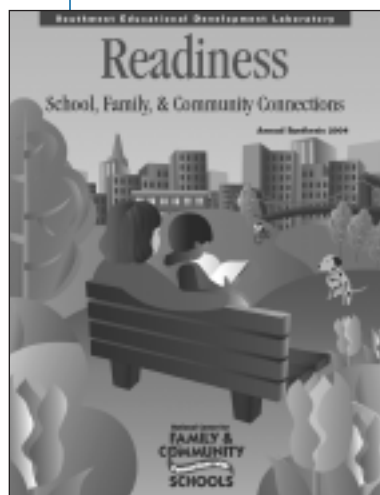
products

New Publications Explore Children's Readiness, Changing High Schools, and More

SEDL provides resources and services for policy-makers and practitioners. Many resources are free and available from SEDL's online catalog at www.sedl.org/pubs/ or by calling the SEDL publications department at 800-476-6861. SEDL accepts credit cards for online purchases and conference registrations.

National Center Publishes Fourth Synthesis

SEDL's National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools has released its fourth and final research synthesis focusing on family and community connections with schools. *Readiness: School, Family, &*



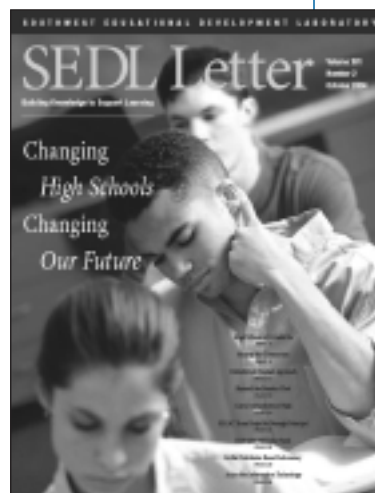
Community Connections describes 48 research studies on the contextual factors associated with children's readiness. In particular, this synthesis explores children's abilities as they make the transition to kindergarten, factors associated

with these abilities, and implications of these factors on children's later success. It also discusses the effectiveness of a variety of early childhood or preschool strategies that include a family or community focus. The 114-page book may be purchased for \$22.

A free PDF version is available online at no cost at <http://www.sedl.org/connections/research-syntheses.html>.

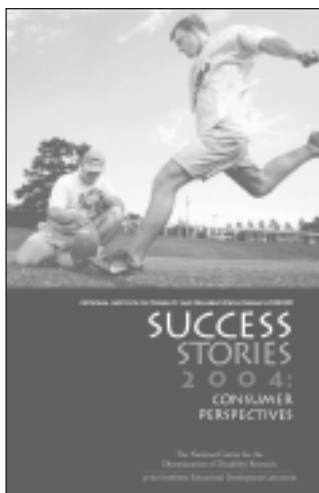
Newest SEDL Letter Explores Changing High Schools

The October 2004 issue of *SEDL Letter* explores how high schools are creating new learning environments to better meet the needs of a changing student population. One article offers practical advice for school improvement, presenting changes that are not costly or disruptive. Another piece discusses the establishment of successful smaller learning communities in Irving ISD. Other articles discuss SEDL's *Active Learning With Technology* portfolio, Teachers as Leaders professional development, and work in school safety. The magazine is available online at <http://www.sedl.org/pubs/sedl-letter/>.



NCDDR Releases Success Stories, Other Publications

SEDL's National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research (NCDDR) has released three new products exploring disability research. *Success Stories 2004: Consumer Perspectives* highlights a variety of successes as told by people whose lives have been positively affected due to involvement with a National Institute of Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR)-supported project. It may be purchased for \$5 or is available as a PDF document at no charge at <http://www.ncddr.org/du/products/success.html>. Two new issues of



The Research Exchange newsletter are also available. Issue 9.2 suggests ideas involving logic modeling that can be used by NIDRR projects to develop anticipated utilization outcomes from project work. Issue 9.3 provides an outline of NCDDR's objectives and related activities for 2004–2005. Selected resources for knowledge translation (KT) and communities of

practice are presented along with overviews of additional resources. Both issues may be found at <http://www.ncddr.org/du/researchexchange/archives.html>.

Insights Examines Improving Teacher Resources

Many education agencies feel an enormous strain to meet the federal mandate that all teachers be highly qualified. State and local policies must be established that address effective ways to hire, train, support, and retain teachers who meet the standards specified in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. In "A Best-Fit Approach to Effective Teacher Policy," issue 17 of *Insights on Education Policy, Practice, and Research*, Jennifer King Rice, PhD, shares her best-fit decision-making approach to improving teacher resources. This issue describes her model and provides guidance on its use.

Insights is published by the policy team of SEDL's regional educational laboratory and may be downloaded at <http://www.sedl.org/policy/insights/>. ■

SEDL Launches New Online Store, Electronic Library

To help customers locate what they need as easily and efficiently as possible, SEDL has revamped the products page on its Web site. The new page (<http://www.sedl.org/pubs/>) has been divided into the SEDL Store and the Electronic Library. SEDL products, which are developed from research and best practices, help schools, policymakers, parents, and community groups work together to improve student achievement both in and out of school. At the SEDL Store, customers can purchase these products, including books, toolkits, and multimedia training packages. They may also request a copy of the print catalog. Many



of these products can be downloaded at no cost from the Electronic Library. Both pages feature different categories and a search capability to help customers locate items quickly.

The Services section of the SEDL Web site (<http://www.sedl.org/services/>) has also been redesigned. SEDL delivers professional development sessions in such topic areas as change management, integrating technology into the curriculum, student assessment, and effective questioning. SEDL also conducts applied and policy research, provides program evaluation services, and develops customized Web applications and databases to help clients manage data and information. Customers can learn more information about these services and obtain contact information for exact pricing through the Services section.

The redesign of these pages is part of an overall new design for the SEDL Web site. The new look will be launched later this year. ■

SEDL *in the field*

“SEDL in the Field” describes the goals of major SEDL projects and programs. This section features SEDL work with teachers, administrators, policymakers, researchers, and community members to improve practice. The following events occurred during July–December 2004.

Disability Research to Practice (DRP)

SEDL's DRP program provides information and assistance on innovations and policies to improve special education and rehabilitation services. DRP encompasses the National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research (NCDDR), the Disability Law Resource Project (DLRP), and the Research Utilization Support and Help (RUSH) Project.

NCDDR

NCDDR works with more than 370 disability and rehabilitation research teams and product developers funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) to develop and demonstrate successful methods and strategies that link researchers and information users. Through these linkages, NCDDR audiences may find utility and relevance in research findings. NCDDR activities include research, demonstration, technical assistance, and dissemination and utilization.

- Program manager **John Westbrook** provided technical assistance to Mount Sinai School of Medicine's New York Traumatic Brain Injury Model System Project in *New York City*.
- **Westbrook** met with NIDRR program staff to discuss the NCDDR 2004–2005 project year.
- **Westbrook**, information specialist **Lin Harris**, program associate **Joann Starks**, and program associate **Frank Martin** convened NIDRR's Knowledge Dissemination and Utilization (KDU) Projects meeting in *Washington, DC*.
- **Westbrook**, **Harris**, communications assistant **Mark Linder**, and communica-

tions specialist **Sean Claes** provided technical assistance via numerous teleconferences to the staff of the NIDRR-funded RERC on Communication Enhancement (AAC-RERC) at Duke University Medical Center to facilitate the development of a logic model to indicate linkages to utilization outcomes from project development activities.

DLRP

In October 2001, SEDL received funding from the Institute for Rehabilitation & Research (TIRR) in Houston to partner with DLRP, which serves Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. SEDL's DLRP work is part of TIRR's 5-year grant to provide technical assistance, training, and information dissemination on the legal obligations of educational entities; to make available information technology to students with disabilities; and to conduct self-evaluations on information technology accessibility to promote best practices.

- Communications assistant **Stephanie Weaver** met with Lee Rutledge, the Texas Education Agency contact, at Region XIII Education Service Center in *Austin, Texas*, to discuss the Showcase of Promising Practices.
- **Weaver** participated via teleconference in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) action team meetings led by Mike Abbiatti of the Louisiana Board of Regents.
- **Weaver** assisted with a presentation on disability etiquette to 50 managers of Four Seasons Hotels across the country.

RUSH

Funded by NIDRR for 5 years in April 2003, the RUSH project works to identify, describe, and encourage the use of effective research utilization strategies. It focuses on disability research findings in health, technology access, independent living, and community integration.

- **Linder** facilitated over a dozen teleconferences with members of the RUSH Advisory Panel to discuss the guidelines for application and review of RUSH Research Utilization Awards (RUA). The teleconferences were followed by the official announcement of the availability of the RUAs as a resource to NIDRR-funded grantees. Fifteen grantees requested applications.

Evaluation Services (ES)

As a SEDL corporate office, ES works with most of SEDL's major contracts as an internal evaluator to design and implement goals-based evaluation plans. This office also collects and manages performance indicator data and conducts a quality assurance process for programs with such requirements. ES assists SEDL's internal programs in reaching their goals by working with program staff to monitor annual objectives and strategies for achieving their multiyear goals. All ES fieldwork for SEDL programs is included with each program's section in this newsletter.

ES also provides external evaluation services for a growing number of educational entities, such as universities, school districts, state agencies, and professional associations.

ES Staff Announcements

ES welcomed program specialist **Jessica Snell-Johns** in September and administrative assistant **Janice Hernandez** in December.



Jessica Snell-Johns joined SEDL's ES staff as a program specialist in December.

Prior to joining SEDL, **Snell-Johns** worked as an evaluator for a community partnership spearheaded by the Boys and Girls Club of Spartanburg, South Carolina. She was also part of a team hired by South Carolina's

State Department of Education to design a parent survey administered statewide as part of the state's school report card and accountability system. Snell-Johns has published on evaluation theory and practice and conducted trainings on evaluation. She holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at Austin and earned her master's and doctorate degrees in clinical-community psychology from the University of South Carolina. At SEDL, Snell-Johns evaluates the A+ Schools of Arkansas program.



Janice Hernandez joined SEDL's ES staff as an administrative assistant in December.

Hernandez worked for Altria Group (the parent company of Philip Morris USA and Kraft Foods) in its state government affairs office prior to joining SEDL. She has also worked for the Texas Workforce Commission, where she helped with the PeopleSoft implementation project. Hernandez has a diverse employment history, having also worked with the Texas State Teachers Association, ExxonMobil Chemical, and Chase Manhattan Bank.

A+ Schools of Arkansas (A+)

ES evaluates the A+ Schools of Arkansas program, which is based on the idea that arts-integrated instruction leads to enhanced learning opportunities for all students because using the arts taps into multiple ways students learn. ES staff focus on understanding the factors and outcomes associated with high levels of implementation of this program.

- Director **Sue Street** met with A+ staff and a representative from the funding foundation to plan for a second year of evaluation for the A+ Art Integration Program at the University of Arkansas in **Fayetteville**.

Technology Applications Readiness Grants for Empowering Texas (TARGET)

TARGET grants serve high-needs students by enhancing education through technology as stipulated in No Child Left Behind and by implementing the recommendations in the Texas Long-Range Plan for Technology 1996–2010. ES staff evaluate TARGET grant work in various areas across the state.

- Program specialist **Cheryl Harris** observed and evaluated the Teacher Summer Academy for the TARGET grant MaXtech project for the Education Service Center (ESC) in *Edinburg*.

Other ES Work

- Street and program specialist **Todd Sherron** observed and evaluated the first integration workshop for the Models of Implementation and Dissemination of Environmental Health and Science Across Subjects (MIDAS) project in *Smithville, Texas*. **Street** also presented a session on the change process and program implementation.
- Program associate **Jack Lumbley** presented evaluation findings at the culminating Project DiSH (Diabetes, Stroke, Hypertension) meeting to Year 3 DiSH teachers and discussed the Year 3 Project DiSH evaluation report with project directors in *Washington, DC*.
- **Harris**, program specialist **Cori Groth**, program specialist **Melissa Dodson**, and program associate **Erin McCann** presented a paper at the Annual American Evaluation Association Conference in *Atlanta*.

National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning

In September 2003, SEDL won a 3-year \$9.6 million contract from the U.S. Department of Education to strengthen the content, methods, and retention of the nation's afterschool programs. The National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning is a partnership of eight organizations that provide models, tools, and assistance to public, private, and community entities that help students and their families learn new skills and discover new abilities after the school day has ended.

- Program manager **Catherine Jordan** presented a partnership overview and gave acknowledgement plaques to sites nomi-

nated for possible promising or exemplary practices during the U.S. Department of Education's Summer Institute in

Los Angeles.

- The Partnership Steering Committee met in *Dallas* to plan the upcoming year's work.
- **Jordan** served on a panel of afterschool experts and program associate **Deborah Donnelly** presented a session entitled "Academic Tools in Afterschool" at Harvard University's Program in Afterschool Education and Research (PAER) Third Annual Conference in *Cambridge, Massachusetts*.
- Program associates **Jerry Elder** and **Joe Parker** met with Foundations, Inc., to discuss new work on developing training academies for afterschool educators.
- **Jordan** and **Elder** conducted a seminar entitled "Embedding Academic Content Into Afterschool Programs" at the National Center for Community Education (NCCE) Texas Training Workshop in *Austin, Texas*. **Elder** conducted the same session at the NCCE Connecticut Training Workshop in Groton, Connecticut.
- Partnership staff conducted a pre-conference entitled "Building Your Afterschool Program's Capacity to Provide Rich Academic Content" for those attending the National Community Education Association Conference in *San Diego*.
- Partnership staff hosted the 2004 Fall Afterschool Training Roundup with the National Center for Community Education in *San Antonio, Texas*.
- **Elder**, **Parker**, and **Donnelly** conducted roundtable discussions during the National Staff Development Council Annual Conference in *Vancouver, Canada*.

Regional Educational Laboratory (REL)

SEDL's REL creates and promotes research-based knowledge to help low-performing schools and districts improve student achievement in reading and mathematics in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. Along with its partner, the Charles A. Dana Center of the University of Texas at Austin, the REL conducts applied research and development with intensive sites, examines

in the field

resource allocation and other policy issues, and operates a national center that disseminates research and resources on school, family, and community connections.

REL Staff Announcements

SEDL's REL welcomed program specialist **Lotte Smith-Hansen** in September, program specialist **Kathleen Theodore** in November, program specialist **Karen Herbert** in December, and administrative secretary **Peggy Brown** in December.



Lotte Smith-Hansen joined SEDL's REL staff as a program specialist in September.

Prior to joining SEDL, **Smith-Hansen** worked with SEDL policy staff as an employee of the Charles A. Dana Center of the University of Texas at Austin. She has also worked in the Department of Psychology at the University of Texas at Austin. Smith-Hansen holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Texas at Austin and a master's degree in health psychology from Texas State University with a specialization in quantitative research and data analysis. At SEDL, she works on the policy team to conduct education policy research and disseminate the findings to policymakers in SEDL's region.



Kathleen Theodore joined SEDL's REL staff as a program specialist in November.

Theodore worked for the Louisiana Department of Education Region I Education Service Center, where she coordinated regional and statewide Reading First professional development activities and provided extensive follow-up through mentoring and coaching, before coming to SEDL. She has also worked as a literary facilitator with the New Orleans Public Schools. Theodore holds a master's degree in curriculum and instruction from Xavier University of New Orleans. At SEDL, she assists state departments in implementing their Reading First plan.

In her previous position, **Herbert** was a research specialist with the Texas State Board for Educator Certification, where she conducted research on teacher shortages, retention, and quality. She has also served as a research assistant with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, where she conducted research on comprehensive school reform and school capacity for improving student learning. Herbert holds a master's degree in educational psychology with a specialization in measurement and evaluation from Michigan



Karen Herbert joined SEDL's REL staff as a program specialist in December.

State University. She was a doctoral student in educational policy and organization at the University of California, Berkeley, and plans to complete her PhD in educational policy and planning at the University of Texas at Austin. At SEDL, Herbert conducts research related to the transformation of low-performing schools and districts into high-performing educational systems through SEDL's *Working Systemically* model.

Brown has been in the administrative field for a number of years supporting a wide range of professionals, such as directors, managers, and their staff. She brings with her the knowledge and experience gained from work



Peggy Brown joined SEDL's REL staff as an administrative secretary in December.

ing in such companies as TRW Space and Defense, the University of New Mexico Engineering Research Institute, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories, and Triangle Pacific, a wood-flooring manufacturer.

REL Intensive Site Work

Arkansas

- Program associate **D'Ette Cowan** provided a 2-day leadership training to the **Osceola** School District administrative team. The training focused on leadership roles for implementing the Professional Teaching and Learning Cycle (PTLC) and on holding effective meetings.
- **Cowan** and program associates **Deborah Reed** and **Danny Martinez** facilitated professional development for grades 5–12 teachers in the **Osceola** School District on the PTLC, text structures for increasing reading comprehension, and technology support for using text structures.
- Program associate **Stella Bell** assisted the **Grady** School District as it is being assimilated into a neighboring school district. Bell provided professional development related to curriculum (research-based strategies), instruction (alignment), and assessment (types of assessments and what they show). Program associate **Stacey Joyner** assisted teams in aligning curriculum. SEDL has exited the Grady School District due to the consolidation.
- Program associate **Kim Hughes** and Web administrator **Brian Litke** met with representatives from the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) in **Little Rock** to discuss Arkansas's process for schools to develop an annual school improvement plan. SEDL's REL will assist Arkansas in developing an online

school improvement plan system that will allow schools to submit and edit their plans easily as well as allow ADE staff to review, approve, and develop reports from school plans.

- Program associate **Ed Tobia** presented a workshop in **Little Rock** on effective implementation strategies to schools from across the state that have been awarded comprehensive school reform (CSR) grants. School representatives left with a plan to measure the implementation of their CSR programs.

Louisiana

- **Tobia** assisted district staff with conducting a staff development session for the 16 district and school administrators in **Madison Parish**. The focus of the sessions was on supporting the district plan to align classroom instruction with the state's recently distributed grade-level expectations, which specify what students should know and be able to do in each subject at each grade level.
- **Tobia** and program associate **Jill Slack** presented staff development sessions to support the implementation of the PTLC to align the reading curriculum in **Madison Parish**.
- **Bell** and Dana Center program coordinator **Emma Trevino** attended the **Lafourche Parish** District Principals' Meeting to introduce and demonstrate the PTLC and review the state accountability data and results. They also met with the Lafourche Parish District Leadership Team (DLT) to review and rewrite the action plan activities for implementing the PTLC during the 2004–2005 school year.
- Scholar emerita **Shirley Hord** served as consultant for the design of a study of the feasibility of providing coaching and follow-up to school improvement teams via technology in **New Orleans**.

New Mexico

- **Reed** worked with teachers from **Hatch Valley** Schools via e-mail as they revised their vocabulary lists and worked on vertical alignment in grades K–5. She also met the new superintendent and confirmed the SEDL partnership.
- **Joyner** and program associate **Ann Neeley** presented the plans for the new year to

in the field

the language arts department at *Bernalillo* Middle School.

Oklahoma

- **Cowan** presented district and school student-performance data from the Oklahoma School Testing Program to the *Crooked Oak* School Board.
- **Cowan** and **Reed** facilitated meetings with the *Crooked Oak* DLT to review district and school student-performance data from the Oklahoma School Testing Program, deepen understanding of the PTLC, plan future professional development, define roles of literacy coaches, and organize campus leadership teams.
- **Cowan** and **Reed** facilitated professional development to all *Crooked Oak* staff on implementation of the PTLC. They also reviewed vocabulary strategies and strategies for identifying text structures to increase reading comprehension and introduced a system for mapping the curriculum based on state standards that the staff is implementing throughout the 2004–2005 school year.
- **Slack** conducted staff development on reading skills and questioning practices for teachers and the principal at Washington Elementary School in *Altus*.

Texas

- **Hord** made keynote addresses on professional learning communities to 90 secondary principals and assistant principals and a second address to 125 elementary principals and assistant principals in *Irving*.
- **Hord** conducted a workshop on school change processes and tools and National Staff Development Council (NSDC) standards on staff development and their relationship to innovation configurations in *Dallas*.
- **Cowan** provided welcoming remarks on behalf of SEDL at the 21st Annual Assistant Principals' Conference at the University of North Texas in *Denton*. SEDL co-sponsored the event. Cowan also presented a session entitled "A Framework for Transforming the Educational System: Tools, Processes, and Learnings From the Field."

National Center for Family and Community Connections With Schools

- Program associate **Chris Ferguson** presented two sessions at the No Child Left Behind Conference for the Louisiana Department of Education in *New Orleans*. The sessions, one keynote and one interactive, focused on research that supports family and community connections with schools and the U.S. Department of Education's recommendations on parent involvement.
- Information associate **Lacy Wood** presented "Readiness: School, Family, and Community Connections" at the 39th annual conference of the National Community Education Association in *San Diego*.
- **Ferguson** and communications specialist **Víctor Rodríguez** presented sessions on NCLB and parent involvement and collaborative action teams as a tool in building family and community connections at the 13th annual Back to School Family Institute in *Santa Fe, New Mexico*.
- Center staff sponsored a symposium with the Harvard Family Research Project in *Cambridge, Massachusetts*. The symposium was targeted at educators who are committed to helping students reach their full potential by incorporating family and community connections with schools.

21st Century Afterschool Regional Training Initiative

- The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Southern Regional Advisory Committee met in *Atlanta, Georgia*, to review the work of the past year, identify afterschool training needs and opportunities for 2004–2005, and develop a plan for training events for 2005.

REL National Activities

- **Hord** conducted two workshops in *Baltimore, Maryland*, on NSDC standards on staff development and their description through using innovation configurations.
- **Hord** consulted with the staff development team at Johns Hopkins University in *Baltimore, Maryland*, to design a study testing the delivery of technical support, coaching, and follow-up to two matched

- samples of schools, one of which will receive face-to-face coaching and the other assistance through technology.
- **Hord** served as facilitator for a University of California, Santa Barbara, conference on district-level leadership and planning for school reform in *Santa Barbara, California*.

Science, Technology, and Mathematics (STM)

SEDL's STM program supports systemic science and mathematics reform and assists teachers in using technologies to improve student learning. The STM program houses the Eisenhower Southwest Consortium for the Improvement of Mathematics and Science Teaching (SCIMAST), the SouthCentral Regional Technology in Education Consortium (SCRTEC), and the Louisiana Technology Assessment Program.

SCIMAST

One of 10 science and mathematics consortia funded by the U.S. Department of Education, SCIMAST assists teachers, schools, districts, and states in developing and sustaining quality teaching and effective leadership. SCIMAST staff host state and regional annual forums, conduct intensive long-term professional development, and provide access to exemplary materials and information through such resources as the 40 access centers across the SEDL region.

Arkansas

- Program specialist **Como Molina** conducted a weeklong summer academy in mathematics for approximately 28 elementary and middle school teachers in *Little Rock*. This training was the initial phase of a yearlong partnership between SEDL and Little Rock Public Schools to build teachers' content knowledge and facilitate the use of lesson study as a means of ongoing teacher development.
- Program associates **Danny Martinez** and **Haidee Williams** explored programming robots and the link to science and math standards with the science and math specialists at the Network of Centers for Mathematics and Science Education Center Directors' Planning Meeting in *Little Rock*.

Louisiana

- **Molina** presented a session at the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics' regional conference in *New Orleans*.

New Mexico

- Program manager **Vicki Dimock** and **Williams** met with representatives from the New Mexico Access Centers to determine how SCIMAST can help facilitate their role in improving science and math education in New Mexico.
- SCIMAST staff hosted the 2004 SCIMAST Fall Forum in *Albuquerque*. Educators from local districts, state departments, intermediate agencies, and institutions of higher education began this year's forum by exploring various issues related to the achievement gap in mathematics and science. Participants then broke up into state groups to develop a collaborative project to address a particular need in their own state. SCIMAST will provide support and technical assistance in the coming year to help the state committees follow through with their plans.

Oklahoma

- Information specialist **Chuck Reese** and **Williams** staffed a booth at the State Superintendents' Curriculum and Assessment Conference to distribute information about SEDL and the Oklahoma Access Centers.
- Program associate **María Torres** conducted a weeklong summer academy in mathematics for approximately 13 elementary and middle school teachers in *Oklahoma City*. This training was the initial phase of a yearlong partnership between SEDL and Oklahoma City Public Schools to build teachers' content knowledge and facilitate the use of lesson study as a means of ongoing teacher development.

Texas

- **Reese** assisted **Williams** in hosting the annual fall meeting of regional SCIMAST Access Center representatives at the SEDL headquarters in *Austin*.

Nationwide

- Program specialist **Melissa Dodson** attended the Eisenhower Network Evaluators' Meeting in **Chicago** to revise the consortium survey and the survey protocol.

SCRTEC

Through professional development, information dissemination, and technical assistance, SCRTEC supports schools, teachers, and leaders in using technology to foster student success in achieving state content standards, particularly in high-needs schools. With partners such as the Texas Center for Education Technology at the University of North Texas and the Aurora Project in Fairview, Oklahoma, SCRTEC staff help teachers use technology and enable education leaders to acquire, manage, and evaluate technology.

Arkansas

- Program associate **Marilyn Heath** facilitated a 2-day professional development seminar at Walnut Ridge Educational Co-Op in **Walnut Ridge**. The event, entitled "Supporting Technology Leadership," was held for 25 area principals, administrators, and coordinators.
- **Martinez** conducted two days of professional development on technology integration with 100 K–12 teachers from the Osceola School District in **Osceola**.

Texas

- **Heath, Hughes, and Martinez** facilitated a 1-day professional development seminar on data-driven decision making in **Tyler** for approximately 60 principals, administrators, and coordinators from 17 East Texas school districts. These districts make up the SUPERNet Consortium, a target grant-funded project. Participants were also presented with a set of tools for observing the classroom use of technology.

Other

- **Hughes and Martinez** facilitated presentations at the Secretary's Leadership Summit on Online Education in **Orlando, Florida**.

Smaller Learning Communities (SLCs)

Through a subcontract with the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, SEDL

conducts ongoing site visits and provides technical assistance and professional development to 30 SLC award sites designated by the U.S. Department of Education. The SLC program provides funding to assist awardees in restructuring their large high schools (more than 1,000 students) into smaller learning communities.

SEDL site visits with SLC grantees include classroom observations and interviews with superintendents, campus administrators, teachers, and students. SEDL staff assess a grantee's progress toward implementation and identify technical assistance needs.

Southeast Comprehensive Assistance Center (SECAC)

SEDL's SECAC, based in Metairie, Louisiana, is one of 15 regional technical assistance centers mandated and funded under No Child Left Behind to assist states, school districts, and schools in meeting the needs of children served under the legislation, including children in high-poverty areas, migrant children, immigrant children, children with limited English proficiency, neglected or delinquent children, homeless children and youth, American Indian children, and children with disabilities.

SECAC provides professional development, technical assistance, and information services to state and local education agencies, regional education service centers, tribes, and schools in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

Alabama

- **Slack** conducted a writing assessment and instruction workshop for the Bibb County Board of Education K–8 teachers in **Centreville**.
- **Slack** conducted a writing assessment and instruction workshop for K–12 teachers and administrators at the Gulf Coast Conference on the Teaching of Writing in **Point Clear**.

Arkansas

- **Slack** conducted a series of questioning workshops for K–12 teachers at the Arch Ford Educational Cooperative in **Conway**.
- **Slack** conducted a series of questioning workshops for K–12 teachers at the Northwest Educational Cooperative in **Branch**.

- SECAC staff presented a session on vocabulary development at the Arkansas Reading Association Conference in **Little Rock**.
- SECAC staff conducted a series of vocabulary development workshops for elementary teachers and administrators at the Arkansas Department of Education Regional Reading Institutes in **Jonesboro**, **Conway**, and **Hope**.

Louisiana

- **Slack** conducted a follow-up reading intervention workshop for K–12 teachers and principals in the Jefferson Davis Public School System in **Jennings**.
- **Slack** met with Louisiana Department of Education staff and consultants in **Baton Rouge** to discuss content for the Reading First statewide institutes. She facilitated and presented sessions at the institutes in **New Orleans**.
- **Slack** was a guest speaker on effective questioning practices at Bridge City Elementary School in **Bridge City** during a districtwide staff development day.
- Program specialist **John Hanley** and program associate **Carolyn Clausing** met with teachers from Harney Elementary School at the Audubon Aquarium of the Americas in **New Orleans** during a week of curriculum development. SECAC is assisting the New Orleans Parish Schools by providing technical assistance to the Elementary Signature Schools program.
- SECAC sponsored a workshop at Audubon Zoo for over 30 informal educators in the Greater **New Orleans** area. The daylong workshop, conducted by the Region I Education Service Center, targeted museum educators who offer professional development to teachers. The training provided an overview of the significance for informal educators of Louisiana's new grade level expectations (GLEs) and continuing learning units (CLUs). **Hanley** coordinated the project, which was entitled "Jammin' With GLEs and CLUs: A Workshop for Informal Educators."
- **Hanley** consulted with Longue Vue House and Gardens on the Elementary Signature Schools Program in **New Orleans**. As a result, Longue Vue has agreed to join SECAC and Audubon Zoo

as a partner with Bauduit Elementary School in support of the school's science interaction theme.

- **Hanley** consulted with Teaching Responsible Earth Education (T.R.E.E.) an organization that provides outdoor earth-education programs for children, parents, and teachers in the Greater **New Orleans** area. T.R.E.E. is interested in becoming an Elementary Signature Schools partner.
- **Hanley** chaired a meeting of Compact Six, a networking organization of education and business leaders in the Greater **New Orleans** area. The meeting, which was sponsored by SECAC and the Louisiana Department of Education's Region I Service Center, was held at the University of New Orleans.
- SECAC staff presented a session on vocabulary development at the Louisiana Reading Association Conference in **Lafayette**.

Mississippi

- **Slack** and program associate **Debra Meibaum** met with the Mississippi Department of Education Reading First staff in **Jackson** to plan the content for three regional reading institutes for principals.
- **Meibaum** and program manager **Marie Kaigler** presented "Classroom Management With Style and Grace" at the 2004 Mississippi Teacher Renewal Institute in **Olive Branch**.
- **Clausing** and **Meibaum** presented "Improve Higher Level Thinking Through Questioning" at Sanders Elementary School and Simmons High School in **Hollandale**.
- **Meibaum** helped present "Improve Higher Level Thinking Through Questioning" at Quitman County High School in **Quitman**.
- **Kaigler** and **Meibaum** presented "Classroom Management With Style and Grace" for the Lee County School District in **Tupelo**.
- **Meibaum** presented "What Do You Know About English Language Learners (ELLs)?" with a Mississippi Department of Education staff member in **Philadelphia**.

in the field

- **Meibaum** and program associate **Maggie Rivas** presented “An Overview of Effective Practices for Classroom Instruction” in *Hollandale* and *Sunflower*.
- **Meibaum** and **Rivas** presented “English Language Learners: Promoting Parental and Community Involvement” in *Jackson* and *Biloxi*.
- **Meibaum** presented “No Child Left Behind: An Overview of Title I, Part A Basics” and “NCLB Parental Notification Requirements—What, Who, and When?” in *Jackson*.

Other

- SECAC staff conducted a workshop on effective questioning practices during the National Staff Development Council Annual Conference in *Vancouver, Canada*.

Corporate Offices

SEDL's corporate offices include the Office of Fiscal and Technical Services (OFTS), the Office of Institutional Communications (OIC), and the Office of Institutional Development (OID).

Office of Institutional communications (OIC)

SEDL's OIC welcomed temporary cataloging assistant **Madigan McGillicuddy** in September and Web design specialist **Jay Paulson** in November.



Madigan McGillicuddy joined SEDL's OIC staff as a cataloging assistant in September.

McGillicuddy recently moved to Austin from Los Angeles to attend the School of Information at the University of Texas at Austin. In California, she worked at Loyola Marymount University library as a reading room supervisor, at a children's bookstore, and

at other academic libraries in the area. At SEDL, McGillicuddy organizes and catalogs materials in the Information Resource Center (IRC).



Jay Paulson joined SEDL's OIC staff as a Web design specialist in November.

Prior to joining SEDL, **Paulson** worked for Emmis Austin Radio. There he directed the implementation of the Web sites of their six Austin radio stations. He has also served as a Web developer and designer for the telecommunications company Viatel, Inc., in Bryan—College Station, Texas. Paulson holds bachelor's degrees in computer science and studio art from Millsaps College. At SEDL, he assists in the implementation of several Web projects, as well as the design and programming of Web sites.

SEDL Fee for Services

SEDL conducts fee-for-service activities to ensure more effective distribution and use of SEDL's products and services. The revenue generated from these services supports ongoing development. Services include training in school improvement, technology, reading, and mathematics.

- **Slack** conducted the phonics and vocabulary training sessions at the Louisiana Department of Education Reading First Summer Institute in *New Orleans*.
- SECAC staff conducted a fee-for-service workshop on coaching strategies at the Louisiana Department of Education's Reading First Coaches' Meeting.
- SECAC staff conducted a fee-for-service workshop for Reading First school and district administrators at the Louisiana Department of Education's Reading First Quarterly Leadership Meeting. ■

SEDL's Annual Policy Forum Examines Closing the Achievement Gap

There is no doubt that good teachers, high expectations, and strong accountability programs are helping close the achievement gap among students. But there are many resources—some often overlooked—that can help schools and districts make even bigger strides in closing this gap. Participants were invited to discuss these issues during SEDL's 2004 annual policy forum, held in Austin on September 27–28.



SEDL's 2004 annual policy forum was held in Austin on September 27–28.

About 35 policymakers, legislative analysts, and administrators from a variety of education, health, and social service organizations attended the forum, which was entitled “Closing the Achievement Gap: School Resources and Beyond.” SEDL program associate Zena Rudo said the purpose of the forum was “to provide policymakers with varying views on the achievement gap, opportunities to share best practices, and ideas to take home for effective decision making on the problem.”

Speakers included Richard Rothstein of the Economic Policy Institute and Teachers' College, Columbia University; Shirley Neeley, Texas's education commissioner; Karen Mapp, deputy superintendent for Family and Community Engagement at Boston Public Schools and the president of the Institute for Responsive Education; Larry Picus of the University of Southern California; and SEDL policy staff members Diane Pan, Debra Hughes Jones, and Lotte Smith-Hansen. Participants also broke into small groups to discuss policies states have considered or implemented with respect to the achievement gap, limitations or challenges in each state that impede efforts to close the gap, and resources that are available in each state.

Keynote speaker Rothstein set the stage with his perspective that issues resulting from poverty and minority status must be addressed in order to successfully narrow the achievement gap. These include health issues high-poverty and minority students face that middle-class students do not, such as poor nutrition and a lack of health care. Rothstein observed that lower-class children have twice the rate of vision problems as middle-class children and are more likely to have hearing problems and untreated dental cavities. He also cited differences in parenting that reflected the parents' level of education and their experience in the job market. For example, middle class parents are more likely to read to their children, ask their children questions, and involve their children in problem-solving activities.

Mapp also discussed the role of parent involvement in closing the achievement gap. Specifically, Mapp stressed the importance of broadening the view of parent involvement from, for example, counting attendance at school functions to fostering ways parents could help children reach high levels of success at home. She suggested that policymakers and administrators embrace a philosophy of partnership and share power with families. She emphasized that the many disparate resources, such as families, communities, high-quality teachers, and social services providers, must work together and likened the concept of closing the achievement gap to a bridge supported by many cables.

“Closing the achievement gap is multifaceted,” Mapp said. “Just as cables hold up the bridge, we need all those resources to hold up the bridge so our children can march to success.” ■



Speakers included Richard Rothstein, Shirley Neeley, Karen Mapp, Larry Picus, Diane Pan, Debra Hughes Jones, and Lotte Smith-Hansen.

SEDL

calendar

SEDL staff will be involved with the following events during the upcoming months. Visit www.sedl.org/new/calendar.html for more SEDL events.

February

- 9-11 **Southwest Educational Research Association (SERA)**
New Orleans, Louisiana
SEDL policy staff will present a session on an investigation of state education databases in four southwestern states.
- 10-11 **University of North Texas College of Education Center for Parent Education Annual Conference**
Denton, Texas
Staff from SEDL's National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools will present *Readiness: School, Family, & Community Connections*.
- 16-19 **Foundations, Inc., Beyond School Hours VIII Conference**
Atlanta, Georgia
Staff from SEDL's National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning will present information on some of the best materials

18-20

Texas PTA 2005 Convention
Galveston, Texas
Staff from SEDL's National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools will present effective strategies for connecting families and schools.

23

Building Your Afterschool Program's Capacity to Provide Rich Academic Content
San Antonio, Texas
SEDL's National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning will present this 3-hour preconference in conjunction with the National AfterSchool Association's Annual Conference.

23-25

National Center for Education Statistics Annual Conference on Management Information Systems (MIS)
New Orleans, Louisiana
SEDL policy staff will present a session discussing the use of state databases to support linking resources and student performance.

SEDL LINKS

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