

# links

## SEDL Institute Builds Leadership to Support Instructional Coherence

**L**eadership “has long been recognized as a critical element in educational improvement; however, unless that leadership at all levels is focused on the right things, little improvement will be seen in student learning,” says SEDL program associate D’Ette Cowan. For that reason, building leadership capacity for sustained student achievement is the goal of SEDL’s annual Regional Educational Laboratory Summer Leadership Institute, designed to enhance the REL’s systemic intensive site work with schools and districts. The theme of this year’s institute, held June 7–10 in Austin, was “Improving Student Achievement: Instructional Coherence in Every Classroom.”

“Last year’s leadership institute provided an opportunity for us to share a model for working systemically that we believe will sustain improvement over time and adapt to changing demands upon districts and schools,” says Cowan. “We learned that working systemically meant working at multiple levels of the system on components directly linked to student learning and developing vital competencies to do such work.”

Fifty-one administrators from 14 schools and districts in Arkansas, Louisiana, New



Curriculum coordinator Opal Broussard and math/science supervisor Carey Laviolette of Iberia Parish, LA, study the Professional Teaching and Learning Cycle (PTLC).

Mexico, and Oklahoma participated in sessions that highlighted achieving instructional coherence in mathematics and reading by using SEDL’s Professional Teaching and Learning Cycle (PTLC). Most of the participants have been working with staff from the

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## SEDL Institute, continued

SEDL Regional Educational Laboratory and SEDL partners the Charles A. Dana Center of The University of Texas at Austin and American Indian Research and Development, Inc., to implement the PTLC in their schools.

The PTLC is a process of collaboration and job-embedded professional development designed to improve teacher efficacy and instructional coherence. The PTLC involves the following steps:

- Study standards and agree on expectations
- Select instructional strategies and resources that meet the standards and expectations
- Plan lessons that include a common assessment
- Implement the plan
- Analyze student work
- Intervene to ensure that all students are proficient in the standards

During the institute, the administrators worked through the cycle as a group of teachers would. They discussed the three specific leadership roles of the PTLC: communicating clear expectations, building capacity, and monitoring and reviewing progress.

“For many of our participants,” says Cowan, “these new roles changed the way they had previously thought about leadership as well as their day-to-day work.”

Participants often worked in groups to discuss issues or solve problems, such as the “pool problem” in which they learned



Accountability manager Teresa Foreman and math specialist Emily Rash of Monroe City, LA, work together during SEDL's Leadership Institute.

to focus on algebraic thinking without ignoring measurement. By the end of the four-day institute, the participants understood the unifying premise of all the sessions: Leadership is key to improving teaching and learning. “Schools and teachers must work together,” says David Hill, deputy director of the Charles A. Dana Center. “Teachers need leadership to succeed.” ■

## SEDL Web Site Named AEP Finalist

The Web site for SEDL's National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools ([www.sedl.org/connections](http://www.sedl.org/connections)) was named a finalist in the Association of Educational Publishers' Distinguished Achievement competition. Sites were judged based on technical merit, quality of writing, educational value, originality/creativity, and audience interest.

Staff from the National Center and SEDL's Office of Institutional Communications developed and designed the Web site. It includes a database of research literature related to family and community involvement with schools and a searchable online version of *A Resource Guide for Planning and Operating After-School Programs* complete with links to many after-school resources.



# products

## SEDL Products Used Around the World

*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/](http://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.*



Teachers from six schools in Nigeria participated in workshops based on SEDL's Active Learning with Technology portfolio.

While the name "Southwest Educational Development Laboratory" implies a regional focus, SEDL in fact reaches educators on a global scale. A group in Nigeria contacted the SEDL staff recently to praise the *Active Learning with Technology* portfolio.

"We are a group that works with teachers and educators in Africa, helping to redefine education in our classrooms in order to make learning more engaging. We have been working with the *Active Learning with Technology* module and have seen amazing results," said the customer. "Thanks so much for the wonderful work you are doing."

Developed for educators who work with K-12 teachers, the materials and activities in the *Active Learning with Technology* portfolio were field tested and carried out in a variety of settings by more than 1,000 teachers. In December 2001, the portfolio earned the Exemplary Use of Technology Award from the National Staff Development Council.

*Active Learning with Technology* includes 18 modules that range from one to six hours in length, a series of 10 videos (including eight classroom episode videos showing real teachers in their classrooms, the *Engaged Discoverers* video, and the *Classrooms Under Construction* video), six issues of the *TAP Into Learning* newsletter, a CD-ROM version of the ALT materials, and additional print and Web resources. The modules focus on helping teachers learn to develop and implement learner-centered environments supported by technology. Additional resources in the portfolio include *Connecting Student Learning with Technology* and *Constructing Knowledge With Technology: A Review of the Literature*. ■



Participants in the workshop in Nigeria praised the effectiveness of the Active Learning with Technology portfolio.

# SEDL's Research Publications on Parental Involvement Inform NCLB Guidelines

The U.S. Department of Education used research when creating new guidelines to help schools administer the parental involvement provisions of NCLB. *Parental Involvement: Title I, Part A Non-Regulatory Guidance* draws on work done by SEDL and on other current research to answer questions about parental involvement.

"There is an increasing national emphasis on research-based educational programs and practices," says Cathy Jordan, director of SEDL's National Center for Family, School, and Community Connections. "It is critical, therefore, that those who lead parent and family initiatives be familiar with research in the field in order to be credible and to lead successfully."

Two of SEDL's research publications, *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement* and *Diversity: School, Family, and Community Connections*, identify research-based strategies for connecting families and communities with schools. These strategies, listed below, are integrated throughout the *Guidance* publication.

Research-based strategies described in SEDL's syntheses	NCLB mandates for local school districts
Schools and school districts should adopt formal policies that promote family involvement.	Local schools and districts must develop, with parents of children participating in Title I, Part A programs, written policies explaining how schools will provide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• coordination and other support necessary in implementing effective parental involvement activities;</li> <li>• training to increase school and parent capacity for strong parental involvement;</li> <li>• coordination of parental involvement strategies for other programs; and</li> <li>• an annual evaluation of these policies specifically identifying barriers to parental participation.</li> </ul>
Schools and school districts should strengthen school staff capacity to work effectively with families.	Local schools and districts must educate their staff in effective strategies to engage parents as equal partners, including processes that promote <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• value and utility of parental contributions;</li> <li>• ways to reach out to parents;</li> <li>• methods to implement programs; and</li> <li>• ways to build ties between parents and schools.</li> </ul>
Schools and school districts should provide training and resources to families to help parents support early literacy.	Local schools and districts must provide materials and trainings to help parents work with their children by providing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• literacy programs;</li> <li>• information about essential components to reading instruction; and</li> <li>• training about various resources.</li> </ul>
Schools and school districts should design programs that help families guide their children's learning.	Local schools and districts must coordinate and conduct <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parent involvement activities with programs such as Head Start or Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters and</li> <li>• other activities, such as forming parent resource centers.</li> </ul>



To learn more about the *Guidance* publication, go to [www.sde.state.id.us/Dept/ParentInvolvement.htm](http://www.sde.state.id.us/Dept/ParentInvolvement.htm).

For more information about SEDL's National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools, go to [www.sedl.org/connections/](http://www.sedl.org/connections/). ■

# 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 March-April 2004.*

## Disability Research to Practice (DRP)

SEDL's DRP 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.

### DRP Staff Announcements

- Program manager **John Westbrook** was elected vice president of the National Association of Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (NARRTC). During his two-year term, **Westbrook** will assist the president and plan and implement the organization's annual conference.
- Communications specialist **Sean Claes** contributed the feature article “Web Site Accessibility 101” to the April issue of *Equity*, the e-newsletter of the World Institute on Disability.

### 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.

- **Westbrook** and information specialist **Lin**

**Harris** made a presentation on NCDDR and RUSH project activities at the NIDRR-funded Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERC) directors meeting in **Arlington, VA**.

- **Westbrook** participated in an advisory committee meeting of the New York Traumatic Brain Injury Project, which was convened by the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in **New York**.
- **Westbrook** attended an advisory board meeting of the Rehabilitation Prospective Payment Health Services Research DRRP at the Rehabilitation Institute of **Chicago**.
- **Westbrook**, program associate **Joann Starks**, program associate **Frank Martin**, and communications assistant **Mark Linder** participated in the National Association of Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (NARRTC) annual conference in **Washington, DC**.
- **Westbrook** participated in the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC) advisory committee meeting in **Chapel Hill, NC**.

### 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 five-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** represented DLRP at the Universal Design for Learning conference in **Baton Rouge**. Approximately 120



educators from 15 locations attended the conference, which was sponsored by the Louisiana Board of Regents and DLRP.

## RUSH

Funded by NIDRR for five 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.

- **Westbrook, Linder, and Claes** provided RUSH technical assistance on logic modeling to the NIDRR-funded Disability and Rehabilitation Research Project (DRRP) on rehabilitation health-care prospective payment systems research at the Rehabilitation Institute of *Chicago*.
- **Westbrook** met with Dr. Wayne Gordon, a member of the RUSH National Research Utilization Review Panel, to discuss RUSH project activities and strategies.

## 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 those programs with such requirements. ES assists with 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.

### 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.

- Program associate **Jeannine Turner** interviewed the principal and teachers of

Woodruff Elementary School in *Little Rock* and observed an A+ mini-retreat for principals and facilitators.

- **Turner** interviewed the principal and teachers at Hugh Goodwin Elementary School in *El Dorado*.
- **Turner** interviewed the principal and teachers at Cook and Woods elementary schools and participated in an A+ tri-state meeting in *Fort Smith*.

### Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation (OCTP)

OCTP awarded SEDL a three-year contract in April 2002 to evaluate its professional development institutes (PDIs) in literacy, mathematics, science, and mentoring, as well as its Education Leadership Oklahoma program, which supports national board-certified teachers. The PDIs provide intensive, ongoing training for teachers and administrators throughout the state.

ES staff evaluate the impact of professional development on teaching and learning at five levels: participant reactions, participant learning, organization support and change, participant use of new knowledge, and student learning outcomes. SEDL staff work with PDI designers and OCTP staff to develop and implement evaluation designs that inform the commission's instructional improvement efforts.

- Program associate **Erin McCann** and program specialist Alexis Furuichi conducted a site visit in *Ardmore* and interviewed the principal, literacy resource specialist (LRS), and Reading First consultant at Lincoln Elementary School, a Literacy First Phase IV school.
- Director **Sue Street** and **Furuichi** interviewed the principal, LRS, and Reading First consultant at the Literacy First school in Glenpool Elementary School and conducted a teacher focus group for the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation Literacy PDI in *Tulsa*.

### Other ES External Work

- Program specialist **Cori Groth** presented research on high-poverty, high-performing schools with Title I directors at a Utah State Office of Education meeting in *St. George, UT*.
- Program associate **Jack Lumbley** met with Year 3 Project DiSH mentors and

- mentored teachers, administered end-of-year surveys, and conducted a focus group activity to gather additional evaluation information in *Washington, DC*.
- **Street** and **McCann** conducted seven focus groups of teachers for the Oklahoma Educational Technology Trust (OETT) at the Mid-America Technology Center, K20 Center, and Park Lane Elementary School in *Wayne, Norman*, and *Broken Arrow*.

### National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning

In September 2003, SEDL won a three-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 to help students and their families learn new skills and discover new abilities after the school day has ended.

- Program associate **Jerry Elder** participated in the National Center for Community Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Training II and III for 21st CCLC grantees in *Atlanta*. Program manager **Catherine Jordan** led an Open Space Workshop at the same session.
- The Partnership staff attended the Department of Education planning meeting for the 21st CCLC Afterschool Summer Institute in *Washington, DC*.
- **Jordan**, **Elder**, program associate **Joe Parker**, program associate **Deborah Donnelly**, and program associate **Marilyn Heath** participated in afterschool site visit training conducted by CRESST in *Los Angeles*.
- **Donnelly** met with NWREL staff to design reading/literacy toolkit materials in *Portland, OR*.
- **Parker** met with the 21st CCLC project director in the San Marcos Independent School District for a program review of its afterschool work in *San Marcos, TX*.
- **Elder** facilitated workshop sessions on collaboration, management, and programing at the National Center for Community Education (NCCE) Training I Workshop for Florida's 21st CCLC grantees in *Atlanta*.

- **Parker** conducted a 21st CCLC after-school site visit to identify promising practices in reading in *Evansville, IN*.
- **Elder** led a session on training and technical assistance for afterschool programs during the Linkages to Learning Institute in *Atlanta*, which was sponsored by the Partnership. Over 240 21st CCLC after-school grantees and educators attended.
- **Parker** conducted a 21st CCLC after-school site visit to identify promising practices in reading in *Grinnell, IA*.
- **Jordan** participated in the NCCE National Training Task Force meeting in *Kansas City, MO*.

### 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 partners—the Charles A. Dana Center of The University of Texas at Austin and American Indian Research and Development, Inc. (AIRD), in Norman, Oklahoma—the REL conducts applied research and development with intensive sites, examines 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 associate **Stacey Joyner**, communications specialist **Tom McVey**, and administrative secretary **Maria Rodriguez** in May.

Prior to joining SEDL, **Joyner** was the reading coordinator for the Idaho State Department of Education. She has 11 years of



Stacey Joyner joined SEDL's REL staff as a program associate in May.

teaching experience and has served as a reading specialist and teacher trainer for the Clark County School District in Las Vegas, Nevada. **Joyner** holds a B.A. in elementary education from Idaho State University and an M.Ed. in curriculum and instruction from the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. In her new position at SEDL, she assists staff at intensive sites on their systemic work to improve reading instruction and performance.

**McVey** served as director of communications and special initiatives for the Texas



Tom McVey joined SEDL's REL staff as a communications specialist in May.

Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service before coming to SEDL. His professional background includes over 11 years of experience in volunteer and program management as well as community development and mobilization efforts. He graduated from Kansas State University with a B.S. in speech communication and is currently completing his master of public affairs from the LBJ School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin. At SEDL, **McVey** is assigned to REL Task 1, where he writes and project manages the production of the Working Systemically toolkits.



Maria Rodriguez joined SEDL's REL staff as an administrative secretary in May.

Before joining SEDL, **Rodriguez** worked for SEDL as a temporary employee through Ashby Staffing in Austin. She also has served as an office assistant with the Texas Nurses Association and as a service advisor at National Instruments. At SEDL, **Rodriguez** prepares correspondence, reports, and other documents; makes travel arrangements; and assists in meeting and conference planning.

### REL Intensive Site Work *Arkansas*

- Dana Center program coordinators **Carl Juenke** and **Janice Bradley** met with the *Blytheville* district math committee to explore mathematical operations in the context of the action plan. **Juenke** and **Bradley** discussed implementation issues regarding the Professional Teaching and Learning Cycle (PTLC) with math teachers at Blytheville Intermediate School and Central Elementary School. They also met with the district leadership team (DLT) to review the progress made on the action plan over the past year and to make decisions regarding future work.
- Program associates **Ann Neely** and **Sebastian Wren** met with the *Marked Tree* DLT to plan the collaboration on the use of data between the reading team and the school, to conduct a gap analysis of the systemic structures, and to plan for the upcoming school year.
- Program associates **Deborah Biggers** and **D'Ette Cowan** guided the *Osceola* DLT in implementing the PTLC model in all schools in the district. They also met with the West Elementary School and Osceola High School Campus Leadership Teams to guide and monitor implementation of the PTLC at these schools. **Cowan** and **Biggers** facilitated meetings with the superintendents and principals of all schools in the district to identify their roles in supporting implementation of the PTLC model. They also made presentations on the partnership to the Osceola Rotary Club and the Osceola School Board.
- Program associate **Stella Bell** and the *Grady* DLT continued to plan and take action for the implementation and monitoring of the literacy alignment curriculum and the PTLC model in the classroom.

*in the field*



## Louisiana

- Dana Center program coordinator **Ted Hull** conducted the monthly meeting of the system-wide Leadership Improvement Council for **Monroe** City Schools. The council discussed progress on the district action plan and reviewed the critical path from research to action. Council members also discussed using data from state tests to identify areas of weakness and possible remediation strategies.
- **Juenke** and Dana Center program coordinator **Emma Trevino** met with **Iberia Parish** staff to discuss grade-level benchmark assessments that will be developed by math consultant Andy Talmadge and Yvelyn Germain-McCarthy from the University of New Orleans. SEDL staff provided professional development training focusing on sample assessment items from the eighth grade Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) to Iberia Parish middle school staff.
- **Bell** met with the **Lafourche Parish** DLT to take action and monitor the PTLC model in the classroom at Thibodeaux High School and Raceland Middle School and to monitor taking action to gather results for modifying the action plan.
- Program associates **Jill Slack** and **Ed Tobia** facilitated district reading cadre meetings in **Madison Parish**.
- ES Director **Sue Street** attended and presented part of the training for the Distinguished Educators of Louisiana's Accountability System on the NSDC Standards Assessment Instrument in **Baton Rouge**.

## New Mexico

- Scholar emerita **Shirley Hord** and **Neely** visited **Bernalillo** to interview a sample of participants and collect data for the research study that is accompanying the intensive site work. **Neely** and the principal of Bernalillo Middle School worked on a plan for the upcoming school year.
- American Indian Research and Development (AIRD) vice president **Mary Ann Brittan** and **Wren** facilitated a meeting in **Shiprock** of the Central Consolidated Schools DLT. Attendees reviewed and analyzed comparative data from two administrations of the district-wide SRI reading assessment and identi-

fied future steps to modify the Literacy Monitoring Action Plan.

- **Biggers** and program associate **Tara Leo Thompson** worked with district leaders of **Hatch** Valley Schools to align vocabulary instruction to state standards. They also assisted the DLT in the identification of assessment needs and development of plans to serve the reading needs of all students.
- **Neely** met with the principal of **Algodones** Elementary School to conduct a gap analysis of the systemic structures and to plan the work for the upcoming school year.

## Oklahoma

- **Brittan** and **Wren** met with teacher members of the **Kinta** School Improvement Leadership Team to analyze students' reading assessment scores and identify instructional strategies to improve students' reading skills. They also facilitated meetings of the leadership team. Team members focused on students' reading fluency skills, discussed assessment, and identified instructional skills to improve reading fluency.
- **Hull** led a meeting of the **Altus** DLT to discuss the relationship between the data gathered from formal observations and informal walkthroughs conducted in January. The team members discussed district and campus expectations for teachers, students, and campus leaders. They generated ideas for the next area of focus. Team members were introduced to the PTLC model. They also discussed the need for teacher input into campus and district decisions.
- **Cowan** and **Biggers** guided the **Crooked Oak** DLT in implementing the PTLC model in all schools in the district. They also met with the Elementary Leadership Team to guide and monitor implementation of the PTLC in the elementary schools. **Cowan** and **Biggers** facilitated meetings with the superintendent, central office staff, and principals to identify their roles in supporting implementation of the PTLC.
- **Biggers** presented information on adolescent literacy issues to the **Putnam City** DLT and district curriculum coordinators. She also facilitated meetings of the reading

- cadre at Putnam City West High School to redesign the campus reading program for the next school year and to consider possible interventions for students who are reading significantly below grade level.
- Program specialists **Cori Groth** and **Cheryl Harris** observed meetings and conducted interviews to collect evaluation data for the REL Intensive Site Project at *Crooked Oak* School District.
  - **Street, Groth, and Harris** gathered evaluation data for the REL Intensive Site Project at the *Putnam City* School District through observation and interviews.

#### *Texas*

- **Thompson and Wren** facilitated the *Palestine* DLT meetings.

#### REL Policy Work

- Program specialist **Diane Pan**, program associate **Zena Rudo**, program associate **Debra Hughes Jones**, program associate **Celeste Alexander**, and Dana Center research scientist associates **Rachel Kahlert** and **Lotte Smith-Hansen** presented “Using State Data for Research and Policy Regarding Instructional Resources and Student Performance” during the American Education Finance Association Annual Conference in *Salt Lake City*.
- **Rudo** discussed data issues with policymakers at the Department of Education in *Little Rock*.
- **Rudo, Pan, and Jones** discussed data issues with policymakers at the Department of Education in *Santa Fe*.
- **Wood** presented “Diversity: School, Family, and Community Connections” at the 12th Annual International Roundtable on School, Family, and Community Partnerships, hosted by the National Center and SEDL, in *San Diego*. Program manager **Catherine Jordan** chaired the “Family and Community Involvement to Increase Student Success” session, and program associate **Chris Ferguson** moderated the session entitled “The Organization’s Leadership Roles in Promoting Partnerships.”
- **Wood, Rodríguez, and** program associate **Deborah Donnelly** presented “Family Involvement: Critical to the Success of Diverse Populations” and a three-hour workshop entitled “The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement” at the National Association of Elementary School Principals 83rd Annual Convention and Exposition in *San Francisco*.
- On behalf of the National Center, **Maggie Myers** presented “Diversity: School, Family, and Community Connections” for the National Council of Supervisors of Math and “Diversity and Parents’ Involvement for Mathematics Achievement” for the National Council of Teachers in Math in *Philadelphia*.

#### REL National Activities

- **Hord** conducted a seminar for 20 graduate students at Texas State University in *San Marcos* with associate professor Suzanne Stiegelbauer. The presentation focused on the change process with emphasis on tools and structures (stages of concern, innovation configuration, and professional learning communities).
- **Hord** conducted a two-day session with Patricia Roy entitled “Using Innovation Configurations to Move Staff Development Standards to Practice” for 35 *Austin* ISD evaluation and professional development staff.
- **Hord** made a presentation with Jeffrie Akins, principal of Grandview Heights Elementary School in Memphis, at the annual convention of the National Association of Elementary School Principals in *San Francisco*. They spoke about the transformation of schools into high-performing learning communities.

#### National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools

- Information associate **Lacy Wood** and communications specialist **Víctor Rodríguez** presented “Diversity: School, Family, and Community Connections” at the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Annual Conference in *New Orleans*.
- **Wood** presented “SLC Resources—Utilizing the SEDL Smaller Learning Communities Award Database” at the National Career Academy Coalition’s Technical Assistance Conference on Writing Smaller Learning Grants for Career Academies in *Miami*.

- Program associate **Jack Lumbley** attended a meeting of the Cross-REL Performance Indicators work group in *Charleston, WV*.

### Science, Technology, and Mathematics (STM) Program

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 manager **Vicki Dimock** and program specialist **Como Molina** met with administrators from *Little Rock* Public Schools (LRPS) to negotiate an intensive site partnership between SEDL and LRPS. The meeting focused on the proposed scope of work and responsibilities of each party. The negotiations were successful, and an agreement in principle was reached.

#### Louisiana

- **Dimock** and program associate **Danny Martinez** hosted the Louisiana Spring Meeting in *Baton Rouge* in collaboration with staff of the Louisiana Systemic Initiatives Program. The title of the meeting was "Technology for Learning in Mathematics and Science." **Dimock** delivered the keynote address, entitled "Why Technology?" **Martinez** presented a session entitled "Mindstorms: Using Robotics to Teach Mathematics and Science."

#### New Mexico

- **Dimock** and program associate **Maria Torres** represented SCIMAST at the New Mexico Spring Meeting, held in *Albuquerque*. Paul Ruiz of the Education Trust was the keynote speaker. The meeting focused on bridging the achievement gap in mathematics and science student performance in the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) assessments.
- **Torres** attended a planning meeting in *Santa Fe* for the Northern New Mexico Network of Rural Schools Summit to be held in summer 2004.

#### Oklahoma

- **Torres** met with *Oklahoma City* public schools officials to develop roles and responsibilities for intensive site work at Webster Middle School. She also met with Webster Middle School mathematics faculty and representatives from three of the school's feeder elementary schools to discuss proposed work for the upcoming school year.
- Program specialist **Phillip Eaglin** facilitated the Oklahoma Spring Forum in *Tulsa*. This year's topic was "Enhancing Science and Mathematics Education Through Technology."

#### Texas

- **Eaglin** collaborated with Huston-Tillotson College in *Austin* to co-host a geology-oceanography workshop for local science teachers.
- **Dimock, Torres**, and information specialist **Chuck Reese** facilitated a state networking forum hosted by SCIMAST in collaboration with the Harris County Department of Education in *Houston*, which was attended by 84 educators from around Texas. This year's planning group sought more participants and presenters from local school districts, including teachers and school administrators, as well as representatives from the Texas Education Agency, regional education service centers, institutions of higher education, and systemic initiative projects. Participants engaged in hands-on activities with technology tools designed to advance student learning in mathematics and science and discussed issues related to technology integration.

### ***Nationwide***

- **Molina** presented “So Who Invented the Order of Operations?” at the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics conference in **Philadelphia**. His session was attended by approximately 200 educators from throughout the country.

### **SCRTEC**

Through professional development, information dissemination, and technical assistance, SouthCentral RTEC 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, OK, SouthCentral RTEC staff help teachers use technology and enable education leaders to acquire, manage, and evaluate technology.

### ***Oklahoma***

- Program associate **Jack Lumbley** attended a meeting of Oklahoma administrators in **Oklahoma City** and interviewed a group of coaches and a group of administrators trained by Oklahoma Achievement through Collaboration and Technology Support (OK-ACTS) staff.

### ***Texas***

- Program associate **Kim Hughes** conducted a three-hour session entitled “Reapportioning Congress” during the SCIMAST Texas Spring Meeting in **Houston** for 10 math/science educators from across the state of Texas. “Reapportioning Congress” is a module from the Active Learning with Technology professional development portfolio.
- Program associate **Marilyn Heath** conducted professional development training in **Houston** for 22 high school and elementary school teachers from the University of Houston Charter School and the Heights Charter School. Participants shared their collaborative technology integration projects and learned about available educational electronic resources.
- The Building Teams and Tools for Teaching (BT3) program at St. Edward’s

University in **Austin** showcased projects from its three-year project funded through the U.S. Department of Education’s Preparing Tomorrow’s Teachers to Use Technology (PT3) grant program. **Heath** represented SEDL, which was recognized as one of several contributors to the BT3 project.

- **Lumbley** observed a training session in **El Paso** provided by SCRTEC staff to four groups of Yselta ISD teachers and administered a survey for gathering evaluation and performance indicator data.
- **Lumbley** met with the United ISD instructional technology coordinator in **Laredo** and conducted follow-up interviews with six teachers from each of four high schools receiving SCRTEC training during the 2002–2003 school year.

### ***Nationwide***

- **Hughes** facilitated presentations and planning sessions at the U.S. Secretary of Education’s Conference on Accountability and Assessment in **St. Louis**. State department teams from each of our five states were among the 500+ participants.

### **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 SLCs 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 SLCs 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.

- Program associate **Melanie Morrissey** partnered with leadership teams from Irving ISD to host the first SLC Design Studio in the region. Five school teams from five different areas of the country participated in the formal reflective site visit process to learn about the implementation strategies that are working in **Irving, TX**, and design action plans for



furthering process toward their own SLC goals. Irving ISD will be hosting another design studio in the fall.

- **Morrissey** conducted a follow-up site visit to **Taos, NM**, to provide technical assistance to Taos High School staff and district personnel.
- A site visit was made to **Los Lunas, NM**. The superintendent, district office staff, and principals and staff members of Los Lunas High School and the Academy of Los Lunas participated in this visit.

### Southeast Comprehensive Assistance Center (SECAC)

SEDL's SECAC, based in Metairie, LA, 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

- Program associate **Jill Slack** conducted a workshop on strategies for teaching struggling readers for 55 elementary school teachers at the North Alabama Teacher Exchange in **Athens**.

#### Arkansas

- **Slack** led a questioning strategies workshop for 50 teachers and administrators at the South Central Arkansas Cooperative in **Camden**.

#### Georgia

- **Slack** conducted a questioning strategies workshop for 60 high school content-area teachers in **Hawkinsville**. She also presented a reading vocabulary workshop for 52 grades 3–9 teachers at the Heart of Georgia Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) in **Eastman**.

#### Louisiana

- **Slack** and program associate **Moselle Dearbone** conducted a district-wide planning session on methods for examining student work for 20 administrators and lead teachers in **Grant Parish**. They also met with the Louisiana Department of Education Reading First staff in **Baton Rouge** to collaborate on upcoming training activities for district and school reading coaches and teachers.
- **Slack** conducted literacy study group sessions for teachers and administrators at Kate Middleton Elementary School in **Gretna**.
- Program specialist **John Hanley** and program associate **Carolyn Clausing** consulted with staff from the Audubon Aquarium of the Americas in **New Orleans** on proposed education outreach activities.
- **Hanley** and **Clausing** facilitated a meeting of partners involved in the **New Orleans** Public Schools (NOPS) Signature Elementary Schools Program. The meeting was held at the school board office and was attended by representatives from Bauduit Elementary and its partner, Audubon Zoo; Harney Elementary and its partner, the Audubon Aquarium of the Americas; and the NOPS Signature Elementary Schools Program. The meeting focused on curriculum development, student assessment, and program evaluation.



Audubon Zoo educator Dina Benton displays a young alligator during a presentation to members of Compact Six, a networking organization of education and business leaders in the Greater New Orleans area.

- SECAC and the Louisiana Department of Education's Region I Service Center co-sponsored a meeting of Compact Six, a networking organization of education and

- business leaders in the Greater *New Orleans* area. **Hanley** co-chaired the meeting with Region I director Gayle Miller. The event was hosted by Audubon Zoo at its new Nims Community Center.
- **Hanley** and **Clausing** consulted with the Louisiana Children's Museum (LCM) in *New Orleans* on its participation in the NOPS Signature Elementary Schools Program. LCM is a Signature School partner with Andrew Jackson Elementary School.
  - **Hanley** consulted with the *New Orleans* Museum of Art on its possible participation as a partner in the NOPS Signature Elementary Schools Program.
  - Stephanie Norby, executive director of the Smithsonian Center for Education and Museum Studies, gave the keynote address at the 2nd Annual Formal and Non-Formal Educators' Expo in *New Orleans*. Norby's presentation was sponsored by SECAC.

### *Mississippi*

- **Slack** and program associate **Debra Meibaum** met with the Mississippi Department of Education Reading First staff in *Jackson* to discuss and plan professional development topics for reading coaches and teachers and for district and school administrators.
- **Meibaum** presented "No Child Left Behind: An Overview of Title I, Part A Basics" to teachers, principals, and local school district personnel in *Oxford*.
- **Meibaum** and program manager **Marie Kaigler** presented "Instructional Strategies for Middle School Mathematics Classrooms" to teachers in *Greenwood*.
- **Clausing** and **Meibaum** presented "Improve Higher Level Thinking Through Questioning" to the principal, teachers, teacher assistants, and other staff members at Sanders Elementary School in *Hollandale*.
- Program associate **Maggie Rivas** and **Meibaum** met with the new migrant education coordinator with the Mississippi Department of Education in *Jackson* to review migrant education program requirements.

### 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 **Debbie Ritenour** as a communications specialist in May. Before coming to SEDL, **Ritenour** worked as the communications coordinator for the Texas Veterinary Medical Association, where she produced the association's magazine, wrote and edited content for various publications, and updated the Web site. **Ritenour** holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri and a master's degree in journalism from The University of Texas at Austin. At SEDL, she serves as editor of *SEDL Links* and assists in the production of *SEDL Letter* and other SEDL publications.



Debbie Ritenour joined OIC as a communications specialist in May.

### SEDL Fee-for-Service Activities

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.

- Program associate **Chris Ferguson** completed the final assessment training in a sequence of three for Belton ISD in *Belton, TX*. These trainings were part of a district-wide plan to utilize multiple forms of assessment that correlate to the Texas statewide test (Texas Assessment of

- Knowledge and Skills) and standards (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills).  
 • Program associate **Maria Torres** and program specialist **Como Molina** served as guest observers/commentators at a research lesson colloquium held at Sherwood Forest Elementary School in

**New Orleans.** This research lesson was one component of an ongoing lesson study partnership between the University of New Orleans and the New Orleans public school system. ■

## *SECAC Helps Create Safer Learning Environment in New Orleans High School*

To improve school performance, teachers and students need a safe environment where they can focus on teaching and learning. SEDL's Southeast Comprehensive Assistance Center (SECAC) began working last year with school districts in Louisiana and Arkansas to help them develop strategies for safe and drug-free campuses mandated under No Child Left Behind. This work has included evaluating school safety concerns related to hazard prevention, school violence, and medical and weather emergencies, as well as school crisis management. Five SECAC team members have been trained as safety assessors using the Safe School America protocol.

Nowhere was that work more relevant than at John McDonogh High School, an urban school of about 1,200 students near the French Quarter in New Orleans. The psyche of McDonogh was forever changed on April 15, 2003, when four gunmen armed with an AK-47 assault rifle and a semi-automatic pistol killed a 15-year-old boy and wounded three girls in the school gymnasium. Parents were especially concerned that the incident occurred even though the campus reportedly was equipped with metal detectors and patrolled by four armed security guards.

New Orleans Public Schools (NOPS) requested the assistance of SECAC's program manager Marie Kaigler and SEDL safety and violence prevention specialist Philip Gapinski. They began working on a violence prevention task force in the summer of 2003 to evaluate and enhance school security. Last fall, NOPS asked SECAC to work specifically with the McDonogh safety planning committee and new principal Walter Goodwin to refine the school's safety plan.

"I think the murder last year was a reality check for McDonogh and the school district as a whole," said Kaigler. "We've seen some progress as specific safety measures have been put in place. As a result, there has not been a major safety incident this school year."

At John McDonogh High School, SECAC staff gathered data through survey and assessment, observation, and review and analysis of existing safety procedures. They then used these observations to make more than 100 safety recommendations, including establishing a student hotline for reporting potential school violence/safety concerns, improving the school's perimeter fence, shoring up check-in points at metal detectors, and limiting the number of entry points into the school—all of which have been adopted.

"The school safety recommendations [SECAC staff] made were right on target," said McDonogh principal Walter Goodwin, who joined the school in July 2003. "Marie and her team were basically another pair of eyes for me. They validated a number of things we already knew and pointed out some safety issues that we didn't know about."



SECAC's program manager Marie Kaigler and her team worked diligently with the McDonogh safety planning committee and made more than 100 safety recommendations.

## calendar

SEDL staff will present the following events during the next quarter. Visit [www.sedl.org/new/calendar.html](http://www.sedl.org/new/calendar.html) for more SEDL events.

5-6

### 2004 21st Century Summer Institute

#### Washington, DC

Hosted by the U.S. Department of Education, the 2004 21st Century Summer Institute will feature high-quality reading, mathematics, science, arts, technology, and homework programs. This year's focus will be on ensuring that all programs provide exciting and effective content enrichment. Contact: Synergy Enterprises, Inc., (240) 485-1700 x105

## July

19 **Arkansas Reading First Conference**  
**Little Rock, AR**  
SECAC staff will conduct sessions for K-3 teachers on reading comprehension. Contact: Jill Slack

26-30 **Louisiana Department of Education Reading First Academy**  
**New Orleans, LA**  
SECAC staff will present sessions for Reading First coaches and teachers. Contact: Jill Slack

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### Reading and Thinking Across the Curriculum

#### Bridge City, LA

SECAC staff will conduct a reading and thinking strategies workshop for K-6 teachers. Contact: Jill Slack

## August

4 **Teaching Thinking Through Effective Questioning**  
**Branch, AR**  
SECAC staff will conduct a questioning workshop for K-12 teachers. Contact: Jill Slack or Mike Hargis

## September

9-10 **Research Guidance: Assessment, Accountability, Action**  
**UCLA Sunset Village Conference Center, Los Angeles, CA**  
Contact: Kim Hurst, CRESST  
Phone: (310) 794-9140

## SEDL LINKS

**Wesley A. Hoover**  
President and CEO

**Joan L. Buttram**  
Executive Vice President  
and COO

**Joyce S. Pollard**  
Director, Office of  
Communications

**Debbie Ritenour**  
Editor



211 East Seventh Street, Austin, Texas 78701-3253 • (800) 476-6861 • [www.sedl.org](http://www.sedl.org)

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