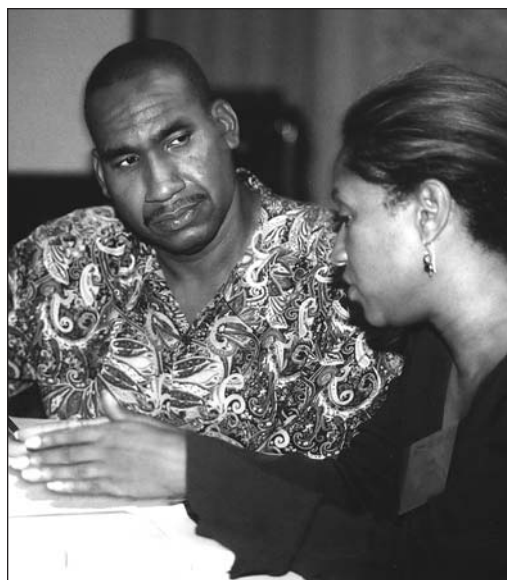


links

SEDL Works to Improve Large High Schools Through Smaller Learning Communities Program

In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act ensured that the Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) program would continue assisting large public high schools in creating safer, more nurturing environments. About 70 percent of American students attend these large schools with student populations of 1,000 or more. In November, SEDL and the Wisconsin Comprehensive Center collaborated to make sure SLC grantees from Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas, and Wisconsin have the strategies and knowledge they need to create safer, more nurturing environments for students.

"Transforming High Schools Through Programs of Study and Smaller Learning Communities," an SLC institute held November 3–5 in Austin, Texas, introduced the nearly 200 participants to the latest information on programs of study and smaller learning communities; gave school teams an opportunity to see how other high schools have improved student learning and increased academic rigor; and allowed teachers, counselors, SLC project directors, and principals to confer with staff from the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), other grantees,



Jason Ogle, chair of the English Department at McDonogh No.35 Senior High School in New Orleans, and Greta Gladney, SLC coordinator at McDonogh, discuss the grant plans for their school at the Smaller Learning Communities institute, November 3–5, in Austin, Texas.

and technical assistance providers who support SLC work and share resources.

"This institute was primarily for new grantees, designed as an initial kick-off to their grant period," said SEDL program associate

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Smaller Learning Communities, continued

and SLC coordinator Melanie Morrissey. “Our role was to provide them with the tools and information they need to begin implementing their SLC goals. This institute was also a good opportunity for technical assistance providers like us to meet these grantees face-to-face and learn what’s happening out in the field.”

Programs of study include two types of “coherent sequences,” according to OVAE. The first sequence is focused on academically rigorous coursework that prepares students for fulfillment of state standards and for more advanced coursework in their occupational area of interest. The other type of sequence involves rigorous technical skill coursework for students in grades 11–12 that culminates in dual or concurrent enrollment credit. At the November institute, new grantees received information on both sequences through interactive breakout sessions.

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. SEDL also maintains an online database at www.sedl.org/slc/ that includes a national listing of districts and schools that have been awarded SLC funds. Each database record features demographic information, information from the grant application, and a list of the structures and strategies each school is implementing.



The SLC team from Detroit prepares the action plan they will present on the last day of the Smaller Learning Communities institute.



Susan Goodale, consultant for Pro-Act Option in East Peoria, Illinois, leads a breakout session on career awareness at the Smaller Learning Communities institute in November.

SLC site visits include classroom observations and interviews with superintendents, campus administrators, teachers, and students to assess grantee progress toward their SLC goals. The professional development institutes, cosponsored by SEDL and offered in various locations around the country, focus on high-needs topics such as literacy, data management, flexible scheduling, and collaborative teaming.

The November institute featured a keynote address by Karen Clark, discretionary program management branch chief of OVAE, who said, “Students need better settings and stronger expectations.” It also included presentations on professional learning communities, data use, gap analysis, and administrative requirements for grantees. Participants attended breakout sessions on instructional strategies, community connections, equity, governance structures, career awareness, and student engagement. Then they reflected in their own school teams and prepared team action plan presentations for the last day of the institute.

“Participants left with a better idea of their grant responsibilities and a list of model schools to tap into for best practices,” Morrissey said. “They’ve been able to make connections with the regional partners, network with other schools in their regions doing the same kind of work, and learn about strategies that can assist them in their restructuring efforts.” ■

Hoover Selected NEKIA Board Chair

SEDL CEO and president Wesley Hoover was selected to serve as chair of the board of directors of the National Education Knowledge Industry Association (NEKIA) in December.

NEKIA's 22-member board selected Hoover for the one-year appointment. He succeeds Bernice Stafford, vice president of school strategies and evaluations for PLATO Learning, Inc., of Bloomington, Minnesota.

"I am pleased to lead NEKIA's board as the association and its members work to ensure education knowledge is utilized to the benefit of children and classroom teachers," Hoover said.

Founded in 1997, NEKIA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit trade association that works to advance the development and use of research-based knowledge for the improvement of all children. The association's members are committed to finding new and better ways to support and expand high-quality education research, development, dissemination, technical assistance, and evaluation at the federal, regional, state, tribal, and local levels.

"As a nationally recognized leader in the field of education knowledge, Wes brings to NEKIA an in-depth understanding of our emerging industry and its positive impact on the nation's schools," said NEKIA president Jim Kohlmoos. "The association's staff looks forward to working closely with him." ■



Wesley Hoover

Louisiana School Prepares Students for Careers in Agricultural Science

The Louisiana School for Agricultural Sciences (LaSAS)—the first regional charter school of its kind in Louisiana—celebrated the opening of its permanent facilities on September 26, 2003, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony led by Cecil Picard, Louisiana superintendent of education and SEDL board member. During Picard's keynote address, he commended the school's 260 students on their Louisiana Educational Assessment Program scores, which were above state and local averages.

With agricultural sciences woven into the fabric of the entire curriculum, LaSAS engages its students in interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary learning. The school's mission is to prepare and support students for careers, build awareness of and develop leadership for the agricultural sciences, and address individual student needs so that they can become self-sufficient and productive citizens.

LaSAS opened in temporary quarters in 2000 with 60 students, many of whom were considered at risk of educational failure if they had remained in traditional school settings. Led by school director Linda Bordelon, who

first requested SEDL's SECAC services in 1998, LaSAS was built through a true partnership of school leaders, business leaders, policymakers, parents, and community members. SECAC has provided technical assistance at various levels throughout the planning for the new school. SEDL program associate Moselle Dearbone represents SECAC on the school advisory committee. ■



From left, SEDL program associate Moselle Dearbone, LaSAS director Linda Bordelon, and Louisiana commissioner of agriculture Bob Odom attend the LaSAS ribbon cutting on Sept. 26.

products/services

Latest Issue of Insights, Updated Resources Now Online

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 publication purchases and conference registrations.

Since 1998 SEDL's Southeast Comprehensive Assistance Center (SECAC) has provided a compilation of all reviews completed by governmental agencies or expert panels listing "exemplary," "model," or "promising" programs for Title IV, Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities, clients. The ratings have been updated recently and the new PDF version of **"Scientifically Based Programs"** is available at <http://www.sedl.org/secac/pdfs/scibasedprgs.pdf>. A program must be listed as "exemplary," "model," or "promising" on three or more reviews to be included as one of the scientifically based programs. The PDF also lists 193 programs identified in one or more of 10 reviews or panels.

During a plenary session at the Office of Safe and Drug-free Schools 2003 National Conference last fall, Dr. Russ Whitehurst, director of the Institute of Education Sciences, referred the more than 800 participants to the SECAC resource as a means of narrowing their choice among more than 80 programs that prevent substance abuse and violent behaviors and identified those rated by SECAC as the "gold standard."

Number 15 of SEDL's *Insights on Education Policy, Issues, and Practice* was released in September. The issue, titled "Investing in Instruction for Higher Student Achievement," discusses the results of a two-year study of spending patterns and performance in 1,500 school districts. The study was

conducted in the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, and Texas by SEDL's policy team and partners from the Charles A. Dana Center at The University of Texas at Austin. It found that student achievement is linked to spending patterns, and that money matters when it is spent on instruction. *Insights* may be downloaded at <http://www.sedl.org/policy/insights/>.

SEDL updated *The Connection Collection*, its online annotated bibliography at <http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources>, by adding 27 new records for a total of 55 new entries in 2003. It now includes 270 entries on current (since 1995) research, resources, and other publications about home, family, and community connections with schools.

A new study published by SEDL examines the status of 278 schools in our five-state



region that implemented Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) programs in 1998.

Follow-Up Study of Schools Implementing Comprehensive School Reform in the Southwest found that nearly all of the respondents in schools where the CSR model is still in place noted a positive impact on student achievement. Even in sites where the model is no longer used, a majority of respondents reported a positive impact. The evaluation also examined reasons schools continued or discontinued their CSR programs and the extent to which the nine CSR components were implemented and the effect each component had on desired results.

To download a PDF of the ***Follow-Up Study***, see http://www.sedl.org/rel/isrm_resources.html. ■

Follow-up Study of
Schools Implementing
Comprehensive School
Reform in the Southwest

EVALUATION REPORT



Southeastern Educational
Development Laboratory
P.O. Box 161
Austin, Texas 78761
512-491-0811

Texas Tackles Technology Planning Online with e-Plan

SEDL program specialist Kim Hughes and Web administrator Brian Litke have been working with the Technology Planning and e-Rate Support Center at Region 12 under the direction of the Texas Education Agency to develop Texas e-Plan.

Texas e-Plan is an online system for developing, submitting, reviewing, and approving technology plans. Every district, charter school, and education service center in Texas—more than 1,400 entities—are required to submit their technology plans to TEA as of January 2004. The e-Plan Web site was first made available to Texas districts on January 9. Within a month 298 districts had logged on and initiated a district technology plan.

Litke says “With e-Plan, TEA and the 20 regional services centers can now monitor the status of plan development in any district and search and locate information on specific plan elements which was very time consuming when the plans were submitted in paper format.”

After a plan is submitted, the e-Plan system assigns the plan to two reviewers who document their reviews online before the plan proceeds to TEA for final approval. If one or two reviewers decides the plan is not ready to recommend to TEA for final approval, a third review is done to decide whether the plan should be recommended for approval or sent back to the district for further development. Hughes reports that e-Plan offers advantages to both school districts and the TEA. “Districts get a uniform template that clarifies technology planning expectations for them,” she says, “as well as automated integration of PEIMS (Public Education Information Management System) and STaR (School Technology and Readiness) Chart data into the plans and feedback that highlight the components of their plan that align to federal E-rate Criteria, NCLB requirements, and the Texas Long Range Plan for Technology recommendations.” The Texas STaR Chart is a tool for technology planning, budgeting for resources, and evaluation of progress in integrating technology into the school curriculum and infrastructure. ■



Lisa McCray, director of the Technology Planning and e-Rate Support Center of Region 12, and Roxanne Glaser, state technology planning specialist (back row) have been working closely with SEDL Web administrator Brian Litke and program specialist Kim Hughes to develop Texas e-plan.

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.

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

The DRP team welcomed **Frank Martin** as a program associate on January 2. **Martin** comes to SEDL from Houston where he was director for the Information Dissemination and Educational Academic Liaison (IDEAL) Core, part of the Excellence Centers for Eliminating Ethnic and Racial Disparities research initiative at Baylor College of Medicine. **Martin** previously worked for Access to Independence, Inc., an independent living center in Madison, Wisconsin, and for the University of Wisconsin’s Waisman Center on Developmental Disabilities. He holds an M.S. degree in Family and Consumer Journalism, with an



Frank Martin joined DRP as a program associate in January.

emphasis on health communication. **Martin** is also a reviewer for the scientific journal *Health Promotion Practice*.

NCDDR Networking

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.

Washington, D.C.

- Program manager **John Westbrook** presented “Changing Mindsets: Improving Links Between Research and Practice” at the Association of University Centers on Disabilities marketing symposium in **Washington, D.C.** The symposium was designed to raise awareness of the importance of implementing marketing principles as a means of reaching intended audience systems.
- **Westbrook** met with the NIDRR director, NIDRR staff members, the director of the Department of Education’s Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS), and OSERS staff members to plan elements of public information efforts. He also met with NIDRR policy and planning staff on research utilization efforts.

DLRP Networking

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** participated in a teleconference with the *Houston* DLRP staff and staff from the *New Mexico* Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to discuss the identification of schools that successfully incorporate accessible information technology into the curriculum to improve educational outcomes for all students. These schools will be identified as demonstration sites and may serve as mentors for schools who are in the process of developing or improving their own information technology infrastructure.
- **Weaver** presented research findings about exemplary programs to the DLRP network during another teleconference. She also met with the *Texas* state comptroller and the director of technical assistance in the comptroller's office to discuss the use of accessible information technology in the Texas public school system.

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** met with NIDRR staff in *Washington, D.C.*, to discuss the current activities and plans of the RUSH project. **Westbrook**, communications specialist **Mark Linder**, communications assistant **Sean Claes**, and Web administrator **John Middleton** conducted a technical assistance teleconference call with the Center for International Rehabilitation Research Information and Exchange at SUNY Buffalo.

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. 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 has been awarded contracts to evaluate such programs as Great Expectations and A+ Schools of Arkansas, the professional development institutes provided by the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation, and the Technology Applications Readiness Grants for Empowering Texas project.

Nevada

- Program specialists **Cori Groth** and **Cheryl Harris**, along with former SEDL program specialists **Jennifer Beck** and **Jessica-Snell Johns**, presented "Swimming Against the Current: Using a Case Study Method to Evaluate a Systemic School Reform Initiative" at the American Evaluators Association annual conference in *Reno, NV*. Program associate **Jack Lumbley** coordinated a meeting of the Institute of Education Sciences/ Cross Laboratory Performance Indicators group during the conference.

Louisiana

- Program manager **Sue Street** and program specialist **Todd Sherron** presented "New Standards Self-Assessment Inventory" at the National Staff Development Council annual conference in *New Orleans*. "New Standards" was coauthored by **Groth, Street, Sherron** and program specialist **Erin McCann**.
- **Street** and **Sherron** interviewed focus groups of math teachers at four schools participating in the Louisiana State University Math Lab Project (LSU). The schools included Hammond Westside Upper Elementary School, *Hammond*; Scotlandville Magnet High School and Sherwood Middle School, *Baton Rouge*; and Springfield Middle School, *Springfield*.

Texas

- Program specialist **Alexis Furuichi** and **Harris** conducted two student group interviews and interviewed two teachers at Long and Jackson Middle Schools in *Houston* as part of the NanoKids project.

Great Expectations of Arkansas (GEA) and A+ Schools of Arkansas (A+)

ES evaluates the Great Expectations and A+ Schools of Arkansas programs. Great Expectations of Arkansas offers a student-centered method of teaching founded on the belief that when children are respected and expected to do well, they come to respect their own abilities. Consequently, the likelihood of their academic and overall success increases. The A+ Schools program starts with a vision that arts-integrated instruction leads to enhanced learning opportunities for all students because using the arts taps into the multiple ways that students learn. ES staff focus on understanding the factors and outcomes associated with high levels of implementation of both the Great Expectations and A+ Schools programs.

- Program associate **Jeanine Turner** interviewed staff and observed the Great Expectations program at Woods and Mountainburg elementary schools in *Fort Smith*; Valley Springs Elementary and Rogers School District in *Rogers*; Winslow, Humphrey, and Woodruff elementary schools in *Little Rock*.

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 specialist **Alexis Furuichi** observed and evaluated the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation for Phase I, II, and III Literacy training held in *Oklahoma City*.

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 the Region 1 Education Service Center (ESC) area, Ysleta Independent School District, and a group of Central Texas districts.

- Program specialist **Cheryl Harris** observed and evaluated a trainers' workshop for the Technology Applications Readiness Grants for Empowering Texas (TARGET) Grant Project—Killeen ISD, *Killeen, TX*.

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 partners—the Charles A. Dana Center of The University of Texas at Austin and American Indian Research and Development, Inc. (AIRD), in Norman, OK—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 **Frances Deviney** as a program specialist with the research team on Jan. 5. **Deviney** was a legislative aide for State Representative Miguel Wise. While working for the House of Representatives, she worked on many issues including public education and child welfare legislation. She holds a B.A. from Vanderbilt University in Nashville and an M.S. and a Ph.D. in psychology with a concentration in child development from the University of Utah. Prior to graduate school, **Deviney** worked for the FAST (Families and

in the field

Schools Together) Track Project at Vanderbilt, where she was a data manager and behavioral and academic skills leader with children at risk for later juvenile delinquency.



Frances Deviney joined REL as a program specialist in January.

REL Intensive Site Work

SEDL and site staff are working together to develop, test, and refine a systemic-approach model to improve the underlying problems that affect student achievement in reading and mathematics. SEDL also is documenting how districts and schools improve their performances. SEDL staff, along with AIRD and Dana Center partners, conducted the following intensive site activities in November and December 2003.

Arkansas

- Dana Center program coordinator **Carl Juenke** met with the *Blytheville* district leadership team (DLT) to complete the district action team plan. He also worked with the district math committee to review research on effective mathematics instructional strategies and to develop a prioritized list of these strategies—the first critical element in the district action plan.
- Program associate **Stella Bell** met with the *Grady* DLT and with the district literacy vertical teacher team in their effort to align the K–12 literacy curriculum.
- Program associate **Ann Neeley** met with 12 *Marked Tree* High School staff members to plan next steps for the reading team and the school for collaboration on use of data.
- Program associate **D’Ette Cowan** and program specialist **Deborah Biggers** facilitated meetings of the *Osceola* DLT to develop a district action plan to increase student performance in vocabulary. **Biggers** provided professional

development to all staff on the importance of vocabulary to reading proficiency and how to use the state standards to select words for direct instruction in each grade level and course. The two SEDL staff members also facilitated meetings with school leadership teams at *Osceola* High School and West Elementary School to plan and support the process for vocabulary word selection.

Louisiana

- Program associate **Chris Ferguson** and Dana Center program coordinator **Emma Treviño** made two trips to *Iberia Parish*. Each time they met with the DLT to build a benchmark assessment process that is tied to the new Louisiana Grade Level Expectations and also worked with the Anderson Middle School leadership team, which is developing a coherent curriculum with its feeder schools. On each Iberia visit, they also assisted 20 math teachers in strengthening their instructional strategies.
- **Bell** and **Treviño** met twice with the *Lafourche Parish* DLT helping them implement the district action plan to increase student achievement in mathematics and to monitor its implementation. **Bell** and **Treviño** also worked with the math improvement teams at Raceland Middle School and Thibodaux High School to help organize the teams to carry out and monitor the implementation of the district action plan. **Bell** and **Treviño** also worked with the Thibodaux math improvement team to build capacity for developing a positive relationship between district and school levels. **Treviño** modeled a lesson design on how to teach constructive response questions and critical thinking skills.
- Program associates **Jill Slack** and **Ed Tobia** facilitated the district reading cadre in *Madison Parish* in their study of the reading alignment process and grade-level expectations. **Tobia** and elementary supervisor Patricia Candler conducted a professional development session for all six principals and six central office administrators in *Madison Parish*. The session focused on what leaders need to do to implement the district improvement plan, especially to align curriculum, instruction, and assessment in reading and language arts.

- Dana Center project director **Ted Hull** met with the **Monroe** Schoolwide Leadership Improvement Council to review progress on the district action plan. Members also met in small cadres to review Robert Marzano's research on a guaranteed and viable curriculum.

New Mexico

- **Neeley** facilitated two leadership team meetings for Bernalillo Middle School and Algodones Elementary School in **Bernalillo**. One of the meetings with the two leadership teams focused on reviewing the work at the schools and determining ways the district could support and collaborate within the process. The second of the meetings focused on building leadership capacity for school improvement.
- Scholar emerita **Shirley Hord** conducted Fall 2003 interviews at **Bernalillo**. She interviewed the superintendent, deputy superintendent, elementary and middle school principals, and a sample of teachers in order to understand the site's progress in working systemically to improve student achievement.
- American Indian Research & Development (AIRD) vice-president **Mary Ann Brittan** and program associate **Sebastian Wren** facilitated two meetings of the Central Consolidated Schools District literacy team at the administration office in **Shiprock**. The goal of the meetings was to continue planning action to monitor student reading assessment and test score data throughout the district as well as monitoring reading instruction and curriculum aligned with Power Standards. **Wren** also provided hands-on training to six principals at the Central Consolidated Schools administration computer lab, teaching them to use Excel software to organize and merge students' reading assessment data and to graph that data for presentation to teachers.

Oklahoma

- Dana Center project director **Ted Hull** met with the **Altus** DLT to check on the progress of the curriculum guideline implementation, the remediation for identified weak areas, and the district assessments. The team also reviewed effective factors for school improvement from

Robert Marzano's research.

- Program associate **D'Ette Cowan** and program specialist **Deborah Biggers** began to facilitate **Crooked Oak's** implementation of its action plan for increasing student performance in vocabulary. As part of the action plan, **Biggers** provided professional development to the district team and all district instructional staff on the importance of vocabulary to reading proficiency and how to use the state standards to select words for direct instruction in each grade level and course. **Cowan** and **Biggers** then planned professional development on refinement of the vocabulary list to promote horizontal and vertical alignment with the DLT. The SEDL staff members also facilitated meetings with the superintendent and principals to examine their leadership roles when implementing the district action plan.
- **Brittan** led a meeting of the **Kinta** Schools improvement leadership team to continue in the development of an action plan for using benchmark and pre/post reading assessments to build reading instruction and curriculum aligned to Oklahoma's PASS standards.
- Program associate **Tara Leo Thompson** and Dana Center program coordinator **Janice Bradley** held monthly meetings with the **Putnam City** School District learning team to finalize the district action plan. Team members engaged in a systems thinking reflection, sharing stories, successes, and challenges from the school and classroom levels, and planned a support structure for action plan implementation. **Thompson** and **Bradley** also met with the Putnam City West High School's reading cadre each month. The 12-member cadre is made up of teachers from each of the content areas. All high school teachers at Putnam City West are implementing the Anticipation Guide, a tool for assisting students in improving reading comprehension. At the meetings, the group reviewed anticipation guides written by faculty members and discussed how to improve the data management system, measure student engagement, and assess the use of Mark Forget's reading strategies. **Thompson** and **Bradley** met with the Putnam City Middle School principal to discuss specifics of the implementation

in the field

plan to increase student reading skills. They also discussed plans for continued work on increasing reading skills with the elementary language arts coordinator and an elementary reading recovery teacher.

Texas

- **Juenke** conducted teachers meetings to provide an overview of the Working Systemically project at Bluebonnet Trail and Manor elementary schools in **Manor**. Also, data scan interviews were held at the schools to collect perceptual data regarding each campus.

REL Policy Work

Arkansas

- Program associate **Zena Rudo** and Dana Center research science associate **Rahel Kahlert** met with 15 Arkansas state education policymakers and researchers to discuss state data on instructional resources. **Rudo** also attended the Arkansas Legislative Special Session with **Dr. Woodrow Cummins**, deputy director of the Arkansas Department of Education and met with 20 other state policymakers and researchers.

Louisiana

- **Rudo** and Dana Center research science associate **Lotte Smith-Hansen** facilitated two two-day meetings with Louisiana state education policymakers and researchers in **Baton Rouge** to discuss state data on instructional resources.

Texas

- Program associate **Celeste Alexander** and program specialist **Diane Pan** met with **Joe Wisnoski**, assistant commissioner for School Finance at the Texas Education Agency in **Austin**, to discuss state fiscal and staffing resource data.

National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools

- Program manager **Catherine Jordan** and information associate **Lacy Wood** conducted a one day preconference session on the Center's three research syntheses at the National Community Education Association annual conference.
- Program associates **Jerry Elder** and **Deborah Donnelly** presented "What

Does Research Have to Do with School-Family-Community Connections? A Short Course for Teacher Leaders and Staff Developers" at the National Staff Development Council conference in **New Orleans**.

- **Jordan** participated in a working group meeting, "Investing in Public Life," with the Pew Partnership for Civic Change and the Kettering Foundation in **Dayton, OH**.

21st Century After-School Regional Training Initiative

- Program manager **Catherine Jordan** conducted training activities at the National Center for Community Education 21st CCLC Training I Workshop in **Houston**. **Jordan** also presented an update on the National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning to the 21st CCLC state education agency coordinators at a meeting sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and the C. S. Mott Foundation in **Washington, D.C.**

REL National Activities

- Scholar emerita **Shirley Hord** worked with the Northwest Regional Laboratory's district improvement project in **Memphis**. **Hord** conducted site visits to six of the schools involved in the project. She also made two keynote presentations focused on professional learning communities as a strategy for continuous school improvement. One of the presentations was to 180 Memphis City Schools principals; the other to 130 assistant principals.
- **Hord** and educational consultant **Patricia Roy** conducted a two-day preconference workshop on "Using Innovation Configurations to Move Staff Development Standards to Practice" prior to the annual conference of the National Staff Development Council on December 6 and 7. Six hundred conference participants attended "Thirty-Five Years of Change Process Research: What We Know and Don't Know," the inaugural memorial distinguished lecture in memory of Susan Loucks-Horsely. **Hord** and **Gene Hall**, dean of the College of Education at the University of Nevada presented this first lecture. Also during the conference, Hord and **Gayle Moller**, a professor at East Carolina University, conducted session

that reported findings of a study, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on developing leadership for superintendents and principals

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 (SouthCentral RTEC), and the Louisiana Technology Assessment Program.

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 40 access centers across the SEDL region.

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 **Maria Torres** met with two of the SCIMAST Oklahoma Teachers as Leaders to plan logistics for future research lesson colloquiums at Monroe Middle School in **Tulsa**. The two Teachers as Leaders participants, **Preston Hemphill** and **Patricia Powers**, will lead lesson study efforts in middle school mathematics during the spring of 2004.
- **Torres** co-facilitated a research lesson colloquium at Gilcrease Middle School with **Mary Stewart**, program director at the

University of Tulsa. Participants included teachers and **Donna Farrior**, mathematics faculty member at University of Tulsa and **Leigh Anne Locke**, mathematics faculty member at Oral Roberts University.

Texas

- **Torres** facilitated two research lesson colloquiums with mathematics teachers from **Brownsville** ISD middle schools as a follow-up series to the Texas Teachers as Leaders 2002 Summer Institute. The day-long sessions included researching the implementation of a lesson on addition and subtraction of fractions in a sixth-grade classroom and of a lesson on addition and subtraction of fractions in a seventh-grade classroom.

SCIMAST Networking

Louisiana

- At a meeting of the Louisiana Science Teachers Association in **New Orleans**, program specialist **Phillip Eaglin** presented a session for middle and high school science teachers. The session focused on the use of chemistry in crime scene investigations.

SCIMAST Networking Nationwide

- **Torres** participated in the Research for Better Schools TIMSS Facilitators' Training in **Philadelphia**. Participants were provided grants to attend by Intel through the Institute of Computer Technology (ICT).
- Program manager **Vicki Dimock** met with staff of four other Eisenhower Mathematics and Science Consortia in **Chicago** to plan development of cross-consortia products on Lesson Study. Products identified included an online reference list, an online directory of presentations on Lesson Study at regional and state conferences, and a facilitator's guide.

SouthCentral RTEC Professional Development

Oklahoma

- Program specialist **Kim Hughes** presented two sessions to 45 Oklahoma principals and superintendents on the topic of "Authentic Teaching and Learning" using the Active Learning with Technology materials. Held in **Tulsa**, the professional

development was part of the state's Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation State Challenge Grant for Leadership Development.

Texas

- **Hughes**, program specialist **Danny Martinez**, and program associate **Marilyn Heath** conducted the Active Learning with Technology National Institute to professional development providers in SEDL's *Austin* office.



An Active Learning with Technology session was held in Austin.

- **Hughes** and **Martinez** conducted Teaching Constructivism and Technology Integration at Ysleta ISD in *El Paso*, for 150 classroom teachers. This was the fourth of 7 days of training using the Active Learning with Technology materials. The sessions are part of a two-year TARGET grant which focuses on serving high-needs students by accelerating at the local level the Enhancing Education Through Technology section of the No Child Left Behind Act.

SouthCentral RTEC Networking

Louisiana

- **Martinez** hosted a booth at the annual conference of Louisiana Computer Using Educators, held in *Baton Rouge*. Products developed by the SouthCentral RTEC were distributed at the conference.

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 SLCs 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.

- SEDL hosted "Transforming High Schools Through Programs of Study and Smaller Learning Communities," a professional development institute for new SLC grantees held November 3–5 in *Austin, TX*. More than 180 school and district personnel attended the institute, which included sessions on applying practices to increase student learning and academic rigor, promoting equity to close the achievement gap, and supporting stakeholders as they apply new strategies and acquire knowledge in foundational research on programs of study.
- Program associate **Melanie Morrissey** and communications specialist **Víctor Rodríguez** conducted a site visit to Tyler ISD in *Tyler, TX*. They also made site visits to Ysleta ISD in *El Paso* and Wichita Public Schools in *Wichita, KS*.
- With leadership teams from Irving High School and the Academy of Irving, **Morrissey** attended training to create a Design Studio, a formal reflective site visit process in which other SLC grantees can learn about the implementation strategies that are working in *Irving, TX*. These two schools will be developing their own Design Studio process and are expected to host their first group of SLC visitors using this innovative process in March 2004.

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.

SECAC Information Provision, Professional Development, and Technical Assistance

Arkansas

- SECAC Reading Success Network coaches conducted a workshop on intervention strategies for K–6 teachers at Delta School in **Rohwer**.

Georgia

- Program associate **Debra Meibaum** presented “No Child Left Behind: An Overview of Related School Improvement Issues” in **Grantville** to principals, administrators, and staff from the district’s exceptional education office.

Louisiana

- In **Alexandra**, program specialist **Phil Gapinski** facilitated the first stage of a process to identify a four-year plan for the executive committee of the Louisiana Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Association (LASDFSC). He also presented a two-hour session, “Title IV Update,” at LASDFSC’s fall conference. It included a review of trend data that has been collected the past six years in Louisiana schools.
- Program associate **Jill Slack** conducted a study group meeting on literacy centers at Kate Middleton School in **Gretna**.
- SECAC continued providing technical assistance consultation services to the Southeastern Louisiana University in **Hammond** for its Excellence in Health and Education Project (EHEP). During a daylong meeting with EHEP coordinator **Dr. Wynn Gillan**, **Gapinski** offered guidance related to a proposed HIV/AIDS youth summit being coordinated by EHEP in collaboration with the Louisiana Department of Education’s Office of School and Community Support.
- **Slack** conducted two questioning workshops for teachers at Homedale Elementary School in **Harvey**. Teachers used lesson transcripts to examine the

impact of their questions on student learning.

- **Slack** met with **New Orleans** Public Schools reading coordinators to discuss the district’s Reading First plan. She also presented a workshop on reading vocabulary and comprehension at the Louisiana Reading Association conference in **New Orleans**.
- **Slack** conducted a follow-up questioning workshop for Live Oak faculty in **Waggaman**. She also led a follow-up questioning strategies workshop for Vic Pitre teachers and administrators, in **Westwego**.

Mississippi

- **Slack** presented a reading comprehension and questioning workshop at the Southeast International Reading Association Conference in **Biloxi**.
- Program manager **Marie Kaigler** and **Meibaum** presented “Classroom Management with Style and Grace” to teachers in **Lexington** and to teachers, administrators, and other staff in **Itta Bena**.
- **Meibaum** led two concurrent sessions in **Jackson** on “Nonlinguistic Representation—Using Imagery to Increase Student Achievement” at the Mississippi Department of Education’s Closing the Achievement Gap conference. **Slack** conducted concurrent sessions titled, “Teaching Thinking Through Effective Questioning.”

Other Professional Development

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** continued ongoing assessment trainings for Belton ISD in **Belton, TX**. These trainings are part of a districtwide plan to utilize multiple forms of assessment that correlate to Texas’s statewide test (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills) and standards (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills). ■

SEDL

calendar

SEDL staff will present the following events during the next quarter. Visit www.sedl.org/new/calendar.html for more SEDL events.

March

1–2 SCIMAST Texas Spring Meeting
Houston, TX
Invited educators will focus on using technology to improve mathematics and science learning.
Contact: Vicki Dimock

4–5 NIDRR Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers RER(C) director's meeting
Washington, D.C.
Contact: John Westbrook

4–5 SCIMAST Consortia Advisory Board Meeting
Dallas, TX
Contact: Vicki Dimock

9–11 Teaching Constructivism and Technology Integration
El Paso, TX
SouthCentral RTEC will conduct training at Ysleta ISD using Active Learning with Technology materials.
Contact: Danny Martinez

11–13 American Education Finance Association Annual Conference
Salt Lake City, UT
SEDL's policy team will present a paper. Contact: Zena Rudo

12 SCIMAST New Mexico Spring Meeting
Albuquerque, NM
Invited NM educators will focus on the achievement gap in mathematics and science.
Contact: Vicki Dimock

15–20 SCIMAST Cross-Consortia Evaluators Meeting
Honolulu, HI
Contact: Melissa Dodson

18–19 Vocabulary Development
Eastman, GA
SECAC staff will conduct two workshops on strategies for effective instruction in vocabulary.
Contact: Jill Slack

20–22 Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
New Orleans, LA
Lacy Wood and Víctor Rodríguez will present "Diversity: School, Family, & Community Connections." Contact: Jill Dodge

27–29 National School Board Association
Orlando, FL
SEDL will have a booth at the annual conference.
Contact: Jill Dodge

April

8 Research Lesson Colloquium
Brownsville, TX
To be held for participants of the Texas Summer Middle School Mathematics Academy.
Contact: Maria Torres

12 12th Annual International Roundtable on School, Family, and Community Partnerships
San Diego, CA
SEDL's National Center for School, Family, and Community Connections will cohost the roundtable. Contact: Lacy Wood

April, continued

12–16 American Education Research Association Annual Conference
San Diego, CA
SEDL's policy team will present six papers during the conference.
Contact: Zena Rudo

16–20 83rd Annual Convention and Exposition, National Association of Elementary School Principals
San Francisco, CA
Deborah Donnelly and Lacy Wood will present a three-hour workshop on "The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement."
Contact: Lacy Wood

19 SCIMAST Louisiana Spring Meeting
Baton Rouge, LA
Invited educators will collaborate around the issue of using technology to improve mathematics and science learning.
Contact: Vicki Dimock

21–23 National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Conference
Philadelphia, PA
Program specialist Como Molina will present "So, Who Invented the Order of Operations?"
Contact: Como Molina

26–27

Annual National Association of Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers
Washington, D.C.
Contact: John Westbrook

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SCIMAST Oklahoma Spring Meeting
Tulsa, OK
Invited Oklahoma educators will meet to build collaboration around the issue of the achievement gap in mathematics and science.
Contact: Phillip Eaglin

May

3–6

International Reading Association Annual Conference
Reno, NV
SECAC staff will present a reading workshop on strategies that promote student thinking, vocabulary, and comprehension.
Contact: Jill Slack

12

Research Lesson Colloquium
Oklahoma City
Vertical team of the mathematics department at Bell Isle Enterprise School will participate in a research lesson colloquium.
Contact: Maria Torres

SEDL LINKS

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SEDL Links is a bimonthly newsletter of the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. *SEDL Links* complements and draws upon work performed by SEDL under a variety of funding sources, including the U.S. Department of Education and other agencies of the U.S. Government. The publication is not supported with direct program funds related to any SEDL programs or projects. *SEDL Links* does not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Government or any other source.

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