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School Finance Expert Joins SEDL Team

Policymakers across the country are asking, "How much money do we need and how do we allocate it to ensure that all of our students perform at high levels?" SEDL hopes to help educators and lawmakers answer this question with policy research led by one of the nation's education finance experts.

Lawrence Picus, professor in the Rossier School of Education at the University of Southern California (USC), joined SEDL as a consultant for Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) policy work in April.

Picus said the idea of working with SEDL was intriguing for two reasons. "It's nice to actually engage in something that has the potential for a long-term commitment, but, more importantly, my sense is that the school finance work the SEDL policy group is doing is important and good work."

Picus is director of the Center for Research in Education Finance and a past president of the American Education Finance Association. He wrote *In Search of More Productive Schools: A Guide to Resource Allocation in Education* and is a co-author of *Developing Community Empowered Schools* and *School Finance: A Policy Perspective*. He also edited *Where Does the Money Go? Resource Allocation in Elementary and Secondary Schools*. His journal articles include "Setting Budget



Lawrence Picus joined SEDL as a policy consultant in April.

Priorities," published in the May 2000 *American School Board Journal*, and "Using School Level Finance Data: Endless Opportunity or Bottomless Pit?" in Vol. 22, No. 3, of the *Journal of Education Finance*.

Picus hopes his practical expertise combined with the varied backgrounds of SEDL's policy staff and the corporation's capacity to conduct research will assist SEDL in addressing

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School finance expert, continued

three important and interrelated school finance issues. The first is adequacy and equity.

"I argue that if you build a completely adequate system that provides the resources that every child needs, you'll generate complete equity, too," he said. Horizontal equity calls for equal spending for equal children, while vertical equity says children with different needs require different levels of spending, such as extra funds for children with disabilities. "So if we can figure out what's adequate for children to get them to perform at high levels, we should create an equitable system as well," Picus explained. "And, frankly, it's pretty straightforward to design a system that creates taxpayer equity across a state once you know what the target number is." Picus is currently working on an adequacy study in Arkansas with Allan Odden, a professor in the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison and co-director of the Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

The second school finance issue educators and policymakers need to address is reallocation of resources based on what research shows works. The latest REL research report, *Examination of Resource Allocation in Education: Connecting Spending to Student Performance*, is available online at www.sedl.org/rel/pr-examination.html and investigates the relationship between resource allocation and student performance in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, and Texas. The study showed that effective spending patterns and resource allocation strategies are associated with higher student achievement. SEDL recently began a study that looks more deeply at the relationship between instructional resources and student performance. "Having a good set of priorities for how to allocate resources when they become available is important," Picus added.

Last, educators and policymakers need to establish long-term plans to ensure all students

reach proficiency levels. "School districts typically don't engage in long-term planning functions like this very well," Picus said. Districts would have to determine what they want to look like in 10 years, prioritize their resources to reach that vision, and be prepared to adjust when revenue availability varies because of changes in business cycles or tax revenues. "School districts tend to react to the moment. They don't focus on the future, which is a very hard thing to do," Picus said. And state legislators do not see school funding systems as "living, breathing, changing mechanisms that have to be revisited fairly regularly," he added. "Once the problem is solved, they want to go on to other things. Changing their thinking is a huge challenge."

Picus, who received his doctorate in public policy analysis from the RAND Graduate School in Santa Monica, California, became interested in school finance during a job he took to finance his own undergraduate education at Reed College in Portland, Oregon. He worked with the Portland School District to design some campaign strategies for levy elections. "I got interested in how Oregon financed schools, which led to a senior thesis on that topic and a job as a lobbyist for Oregon school administrators in 1977," Picus said. He then worked for six years at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland before attending graduate school. He has spent the last 15 years as a professor at USC and was a consultant to policymakers in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas before joining the SEDL staff.

While working with SEDL, Picus not only wants to learn more about how the allocation of resources affects student outcomes, but he also hopes to study the broader world of services that are available to children and how to use those resources more efficiently. ■



Lawrence Picus consults with REL program associate Zena Rudo (far left) and Dana Center research science associate Lotte Smith-Hansen in July.

products

LOTE CED Offers Online Courses

SEDL develops resources for policymakers and practitioners. Many of these 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's Languages Other Than English Center for Educator Development (LOTE CED) developed five self-paced, online professional development courses focused on implementing standards in the foreign language classroom. Located in LOTE CED's Online Professional Development Center at www.sedl.org/loteced/opdc/, the classes are

1. "Change Is Good! Innovation in LOTE Teaching and Learning," which describes recent changes in LOTE instruction and learning and the eight guiding principles that provide the foundation for state standards for language learners, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for LOTE.
2. "Core of the Standards: The 5 Cs," which outlines the five program goals (5 Cs) that form the foundation of the TEKS for LOTE: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. The interrelationship among the Cs is discussed and classroom-based examples are provided.
3. "Progress Checkpoints: Defining Proficiency," which discusses the characteristics of the novice, intermediate, and advanced proficiency levels and expectations for students at those levels.
4. "Learning Scenarios in the LOTE Classroom," which identifies characteristics of learning scenarios for the LOTE classroom as well as other strategies that can aid teachers in implementing standards for foreign language learners.
5. "Developing and Evaluating Performance-Based Assessment," which introduces differences in traditional and performance-based assessment tasks and illustrates how rubrics can be used to evaluate them and to provide a road map for learning and instruction in a foreign language class. ■

LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH
LOTE CED
CENTER FOR EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT

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ONLINE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Welcome to
LOTE CED Online
Professional Development Center

We offer online courses to help PreK-12 foreign language educators enhance their proficiency in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Languages Other Than English and in the implementation of standards-based classroom instruction, curriculum development, and performance-based assessment.

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© Southwest Educational Development Laboratory **SEDL**

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.

Eisenhower Southwest Consortium for the Improvement of Mathematics and Science Teaching (SCIMAST)

One of 10 science and mathematics consortia funded by the U.S. Department of Education, SEDL’s SCIMAST shares and creates resources and makes them available to schools. Since 1992, SCIMAST has supported meaningful reform of mathematics and science education in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas through intensive, long-term professional development and teaching assistance, networking that brings together people across the education system to address common goals, and provision of information and resources through access centers and other sources.

SCIMAST Professional Development

Arkansas

- Program specialist **Como Molina** and program associate **Maria Torres** co-facilitated a research lesson colloquium in **North Little Rock** on March 11. Taught by two Poplar Street Middle School teachers, the event was a follow-up to the Arkansas Teachers as Leaders Academy for middle school mathematics teachers.
- On March 18, **Molina** and **Torres** co-facilitated a research lesson colloquium in **Fort Smith** with a teacher from Kimmons Junior High School for Kimmons and Darby Junior High faculty as part of SCIMAST’s Middle School Mathematics Project. Evaluation Services program associate **Jeannine Turner** observed a lesson study and collected evaluation data.

Louisiana

- On March 1, program specialist **Phillip Eaglin** led “Chemistry Lab Activity Re-design Using CBL Technology” at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette as a follow-up session to the ongoing Teachers as Leaders Academy in calculator-based lab (CBL) technology. During this session, teachers worked collegially in a peer mentoring relationship with other teachers to redesign science lab activities and discuss topics from the SCIMAST Summer Academy they attended in 2002.
- **Torres** facilitated a research lesson colloquium in **New Orleans** on April 11. The event was a follow-up session to the Louisiana Teachers as Leaders Academy for middle school mathematics teachers. **Turner** observed a lesson study and collected evaluation data.

Oklahoma

- **Torres** met in **Stillwater** on April 7 with participants of the Oklahoma Middle School Mathematics Teachers as Leaders Academy to discuss a research lesson that was featured in the research lesson colloquium she facilitated in **Agra** on April 24. Program manager **Vicki Dimock** and program specialist **Danny Martinez** assisted with the colloquium.
- **Molina** met with members of the Oklahoma City Urban Systemic Initiative on April 25 to finalize the design of a June professional development institute for Oklahoma City Public Schools.

Texas

- On April 11, program specialist **Nikki Hanegan** presented the third session of “Concentration, Diffusion, and Toxicity” to 25 master mathematics and science teachers from the **El Paso** area as part of The University of Texas at El Paso Collaborative for Excellence in Mathematics and Science. She returned on April 24 to

- present the fourth session.
- **Hanegan** facilitated a research lesson colloquium for more than 40 educators in **Mertzon** on April 17. Participants in SCIMAST's Teachers as Leaders Field Science Academy presented the demonstration lesson, "Lessons on the Creek."

SCIMAST Networking and Information Provision

Arkansas

- **Eaglin** delivered the opening remarks at the SCIMAST Arkansas Spring Forum, a follow-up event to the 2002 SCIMAST Fall Forum, on April 28, in **North Little Rock**. Titled "Higher Achievement in Mathematics and Science through Partnerships," the conference was designed to help participants explore the elements of effective partnerships.

Louisiana

- In partnership with the Louisiana Systemic Initiatives Program, **Molina** co-facilitated SCIMAST's Louisiana Spring Forum in **Baton Rouge** on April 4. Seventy educators from across the state participated in the event, which focused on developing professional learning communities.

Texas

- On April 10, **Molina** presented "Who Invented the Order of Operations" to more than 150 educators at the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics annual conference in **San Antonio**.

Molina also developed two brown bag lunch presentations of this session for SEDL staff in **Austin** to celebrate Mathematics Awareness Month in April.

- **Dimock, Molina, Torres**, and Web production artist **Luis Martinez** co-facilitated the Texas Spring Forum, a follow-up event to the 2002 SCIMAST Fall Forum, on April 22–23 in **San Antonio**. Participants representing higher education, the Texas Education Agency, regional service centers, and other educators in mathematics and science explored school partnerships.

SCIMAST National Activities

Hanegan presented two papers at the National Association for Research in Science Teaching annual meeting in **Philadelphia** on March 24 and 26. "Administrators' Perspectives of Support for Elementary Science Education" included findings from a study of the role of administrators in advancing science education reform. "Contextual Professional Development for Secondary Science Teachers" showed the preliminary results from a study of SCIMAST's Teachers as Leaders Field Science Academies.

On March 28, **Hanegan** presented a seminar titled "Equity in Science Education" to more than 350 educators at the National Association of Science Teachers meeting in **Philadelphia**.

SCIMAST Redesigns Web Site

Staff from the Eisenhower Southwest Consortium for the Improvement of Mathematics and Science Teaching (SCIMAST) have redesigned the SCIMAST Web site at www.sedl.org/scimast/ to enhance its usability. The site is organized into categories for such specific audiences as parents, teachers, administrators, higher education faculty, and SCIMAST partners.

The site's main page includes a "Quick Links" menu that guides visitors to SCIMAST resources, access centers, online mentoring, and major activities, including Teachers as Leaders academies and forums. ■



Languages Other Than English Center for Educator Development (LOTE CED)

LOTE CED assists pre-K–12 educators in enhancing the proficiency of Texas students in languages other than English. In partnership with the Texas Education Agency (TEA), LOTE CED staff have developed training modules and workshops to help familiarize language educators with new state standards. Trained facilitators work with regional education service centers and school districts to provide inservice professional development on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Languages Other Than English (TEKS for LOTE).

On March 22, program associate **Elaine Phillips** co-presented a session on the LOTE CED Action Research Initiative at the Texas Foreign Language Education Conference in *Austin*. Research initiative teacher participants from Round Rock shared information on their individual projects.

Phillips and information assistant **Chuck Reese** participated in the Texas Foreign Language Association's spring conference in *Corpus Christi* on March 27–29. **Phillips** presented information on LOTE CED's latest products and activities at the Texas Education Agency's update session during the conference.

On April 27–29, **Phillips** and **Reese** also participated in the Texas Conference on Coordinating Languages and the annual meeting of the Texas Association for Language Supervision in *Austin*. **Phillips** updated LOTE coordinators and lead teachers around the state on the center's latest work.

Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation (OCTP)

OCTP awarded SEDL a three-year contract in May 2002 to evaluate its professional development institutes and its Education Leadership Oklahoma program, which supports national board certified teachers. The professional development institutes provide training for teachers and administrators on literacy, middle school mathematics, mentoring, and science.

SEDL's Evaluation Services (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 professional development institute designers and OCTP

staff to develop and implement evaluation designs that inform the commission's instructional improvement efforts.

Throughout March and April, ES staff conducted site visits at the following Oklahoma schools as part of OCTP's evaluation contract for Phase IV Literacy First Schools:

- Program specialist **Jennifer Beck** and program associate **Erin McCann** visited Hall-Halsell Elementary in *Tulsa*.
- **McCann** and program specialist **Jessica Snell-Johns** visited Lincoln Elementary in *Ardmore*.
- **Beck** and program specialist **Cori Groth** visited Little Axe Elementary in *Norman*.

Regional Educational Laboratory (REL)

SEDL's REL creates and promotes procedural knowledge—the know-how—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 research and development with intensive sites, examines resource allocation and other policy issues, and operates a national center that disseminates research resources on school, family, and community connections.

REL Intensive Site Work

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

Arkansas

- Dana Center program coordinator **Carl Juenke** and program manager **David Rainey** discussed a possible SEDL partnership with district leaders, campus administrators, and teacher representatives in the school district at *Blytheville*. **Juenke**, Dana Center program coordinator **Janice Bradley**, and Dana Center project director **Ted Hull** returned to present further details of the partnership.



SEDL executive vice president and COO Joan Buttram, Marked Tree Elementary School principal Jana Hatley, and Marked Tree superintendent Gary Masters discuss aligning curriculum and standards during an REL site visit in May.

Bradley and **Juenke** also interviewed district and campus personnel, collected data, and met with Blytheville's mathematics consultant to discuss her work and ascertain whether a SEDL partnership would complement current math initiatives in the district.

- Program associate **Stella Bell** and **Grady** administrators built leadership capacity skills and monitored the district curriculum alignment process to improve student reading performances.
- Program associate **Ann Neeley** and the Marked Tree Leadership Team planned activities for the summer and the next school year to align standards, the school improvement plan, and classroom teaching. **Neeley** also worked with *Marked Tree* administrators to build leadership for school improvement and presented information on reading data and instruction to all staff. Executive vice president and COO **Joan Buttram** interviewed staff about their involvement in SEDL site work.
- **Juenke** and **Rainey** discussed a possible SEDL partnership with district leaders, campus administrators, and teacher representatives in the school district at *Osceola*. **Rainey** and program associate **D'Ette Cowan** collected perceptual data about assets and challenges related to student achievement in reading and mathematics.

Louisiana

- **Bell** and Lafourche Parish District Leadership Team members further discussed the root causes of low mathematics achievement and wrote three critical elements to improve students' math performances.
- Program associates **Jill Slack** and **Ed**

Tobia and Louisiana Department of Education staff facilitated two planning and staff development sessions for Madison Parish Leadership Team members to explore the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy reading assessment and to establish priorities for the district's reading efforts during the next school year. **Slack** provided classroom demonstrations and coaching on reading strategies for teachers at Wright Elementary School. She also facilitated cross-grade meetings with teachers on assessment and instructional strategies aligned with the Reading First initiative. **Tobia** and district leadership team members refined the district improvement plan in preparation for presenting it to the school board.

- **Bradley**, **Hull**, and the Monroe System-wide Leadership Committee reviewed evidence on the effectiveness of curriculum alignment and continued to refine Monroe's innovation configuration—the way in which the teachers will adapt innovations to their situations—to address curriculum implementation. **Hull** and the committee also reviewed Monroe's successes for the 2002–2003 school year.
- Program associate **Chris Ferguson**, Dana Center program coordinator **Emma Treviño**, and the Iberia Parish Leadership Team worked to align their school improvement plans with Louisiana state standards. **Ferguson**, **Treviño**, and the Anderson Middle School Leadership Team analyzed data from the administration and implemented the school's innovation configuration. **Ferguson**, **Juenke**, and **Treviño** also helped the Westgate High School Leadership Team design the processes to use for accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. **Buttram** interviewed staff about their involvement in SEDL site work.

New Mexico

- **Neeley** and the Bernalillo Middle School and Algodones Elementary School leadership teams reviewed research on the need to use standards and assessment in their work. **Neeley**, Dana Center deputy director **David Hill**, program associate **Marsha Loyd**, and the leadership teams analyzed reading survey data.
- Program associate **Joe Parker** guided curriculum alignment and development work

in the field

- at Hatch Valley High and Middle schools.
- In *Shiprock*, program associate **Sebastian Wren**, AIRD vice president **Mary Ann Brittan**, and members of the Central Consolidated/Newcomb School Improvement Leadership Team established coherence among the district's reading initiatives, interpreted student reading assessment data, promoted innovative methods for classroom reading instruction, and planned professional development. They also developed an innovation configuration for implementing and monitoring the Four Blocks reading program and for discussing the district's curriculum alignment.

Oklahoma

- Hull** and the Altus District Leadership Team reviewed research on effective schools and the district's progress on performance indicators.
- Cowan** facilitated the organization of the district leadership team for Crooked Oak Public Schools and provided professional development on SEDL's model for working systemically and understanding student achievement and perceptual data. **Cowan** and program specialist **Suzanne Ashby** conducted systems exploration work using data collected from district staff and SEDL's reading survey. **Ashby**, **Cowan**, and elementary school staff developed plans for increasing student performance in reading and serving English language learners.
- Brittan**, program associate **Jerry Elder**, and the Kinta School Improvement Leadership Team reflected on reading strategies, initiated reading and language arts curriculum alignment, planned professional development activities, and developed action plans for improved student achievement and behavior and school policies. Program associate **Marsha Loyd** conducted professional development on teaching reading comprehension to teachers in grades 3–7.

Texas

- Ferguson** and **Slack** met with two cross-grade reading teams at Nova Charter Schools in *Dallas* to assist them in using various informal assessment strategies to align curriculum and instruction. **Ferguson**, **Slack**, and the Nova Charter Schools Leadership Team developed and administered a survey to help the team

establish expectations for staff and students.

- Hull**, **Loyd**, and Dana Center program coordinator **Margarita Greer** administered SEDL's reading survey to faculty at the *Midland* freshman campus. They also analyzed survey results and met with the Santa Rita Elementary School principal to plan staff development.

REL Professional Development, Technical Assistance, and Networking

Arkansas

- On March 6, **Tobia** held a follow-up staff development session for Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) grantees in *Little Rock* to help schools measure the level of implementation of their CSR plans.

New Mexico

- Parker** and **Tobia** presented a CSR workshop for CSR grantees in *Albuquerque* on April 1.

REL Policy Research

Program specialist **Diane Pan**, program associate **Zena Rudo**, and Dana Center research science associate **Lotte Smith-Hansen** presented "Resource Allocation Does Matter in Improving Student Performance" at the American Education Finance Association annual conference on March 28 in *Orlando, FL*. About 45 education researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and academicians attended the session.

National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools

Information associate **Lacy Wood** presented "More Than Muffins: Family Learning Events and Other Parent Involvement" to about 40 participants at the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development conference on March 8 in *San Francisco*.

Center staff hosted the Center's steering committee meeting on March 27–28 at SEDL headquarters in *Austin, TX*.

Wood, program associate **Deborah Donnelly**, program manager **Catherine Jordan**, and program specialist **Vangie Orozco** conducted the preconference "New Waves of Evidence: Family and Community Impact on Student Achievement" at the National Association of School Board's 63rd Annual Conference on April 4 in *San Francisco*. Evaluation Services program specialist **Jennifer Beck** observed and evaluated the preconference.

On April 15, **Wood** made the presentation “More Than Muffins: Parent Programs that Work” at the National Association of Elementary School Principals 82nd Annual Convention and Exposition in **Anaheim, CA**.

Jordan presented “Are There Any Silver Bullets to Help Sustain After-School Programs?” on April 17 at the Texas Community Education Association Annual Conference in **Fort Worth**.

On April 22, **Jordan** and **Orozco** conducted “Advancing the National Research Agenda for School, Family, and Community Partnerships” at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting in **Chicago**.

Donnelly’s article, “Making Sense of Reading in the Middle Grades,” was published in the June 2003 issue of *Middle Matters Online*. A newsletter for middle-level educators, *Middle Matters Online* is located at www.middlemattersonline.org and produced by the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Middle School Association.

REL National Activities

On March 25–26, scholar emerita **Shirley Hord** and the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory development team planned “Re-engineering Schools” leadership work for the **Memphis, TN**, school district.

On April 21, **Ferguson** presented a paper on research methodology titled, “Defining Teacher Beliefs and the Role of Beliefs on Classroom Practice: Applying Bruner’s Conceptualization of Narrative Framework” at the American Educational Research Association meeting in **Chicago**. The next day, **Ferguson** and **Cowan** led the paper discussion “Field Research in Low-Performing Schools: Contextual Issues in Maintaining Research Integrity” at the same meeting.

On April 23, in **St. Louis**, **Hord** served with National Staff Development Council members on a panel to review a candidate applying for certification as a nationally recognized distinguished staff developer.

Smaller Learning Communities (SLCs)

Through a subcontract with the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, SEDL provides technical assistance and professional development to seven SLCs award sites as designated by the U.S. Department of Education. The SLCs program allows awardees to design

and implement approaches to restructure their large high schools (more than 1,000 students) into smaller learning communities.

Program associate **Jerry Elder** conducted an SLCs site visit to two high schools in the **St. Louis, MO**, school district on April 22–23.

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

Alabama

- Program associate **Jill Slack** conducted two reading workshops on April 17 for K–8 teachers at Union Hill School in **Somerville**. The workshops focused on research-based reading strategies for assessing and teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
- **Slack** presented the fifth in a series of workshops on assessing and teaching writing on April 22 in **Decatur** to assist Morgan County teacher leaders in developing district writing benchmarks.
- On April 29, **Slack** conducted “Teaching Thinking through Effective Questioning” for K–12 teachers and administrators at the North Alabama Teacher Exchange in **Athens**. Participants learned how to use a questioning framework to promote thinking and to utilize student responses effectively.

Arkansas

- Program specialist **Philip Gapinski** completed school safety assessments at the elementary, middle, and high schools in

- Mayflower** on March 3. After interviewing more than 50 staff members, parents, and students and completing walk-throughs of all the facilities, **Gapinski** submitted a written report of his findings to the district building principals and the superintendent.
- On March 13–14, **Gapinski** facilitated the Dardanelle School District Crisis Management Planning Meeting for more than 20 school administrators and community first responders. He also met with the three school-site administrative teams to continue the crisis management planning process. On April 22–23, **Gapinski** returned to facilitate planning efforts with district staff, community members, and building administrators.
 - **Slack** conducted a Reading Success Network workshop on April 11 for K–6 teachers at Delta School in **Rohwer**. Teachers learned strategies and resources for developing students' vocabulary and comprehension.
 - On April 23–24, **Slack** led a questioning and thinking skills training-of-trainers workshop in **North Little Rock** for Arkansas Education Cooperative teacher center coordinators. Participants developed skills in fielding and sequencing questions and utilizing student responses to develop higher-order thinking.

Louisiana

- Throughout March and April, **Gapinski** provided technical assistance to Southeastern Louisiana University in **Hammond** on their Excellence in Health and Education Project 2003 Summer Institute to be held July 28–Aug. 1.
- On March 12–14, program manager **Marie Kaigler**, program associates **Carolyn Clausing** and **Moselle Dearbone**, program specialists **John Hanley** and **Dallas Picou**, and administrative assistant **Michele Jackson** represented SECAC as co-hosts of the Comprehensive Assistance Center Directors Meeting in **New Orleans**.
- **Gapinski** participated in the third meeting of the Louisiana Department of Education's Unsafe School Choice Option Advisory Committee on March 21 in **Baton Rouge**.
- **Slack** met with American Federation of Teachers staff on March 21 in **New Orleans** to plan professional development



Participants in SECAC's "Teaching Thinking through Effective Questioning" training-of-trainers session on April 23–24 in North Little Rock, AR, worked on utilizing student responses to develop higher-order thinking.

- for New Orleans Public Schools (NOPS) reading coaches. **Slack** also participated in and facilitated meetings with NOPS reading coaches and teachers on March 7 and April 1 and 25. Additionally, SECAC co-sponsored a state department of education assessment training for NOPS in **Metairie** on March 24–25.
- Throughout April, **Gapinski** presented No Child Left Behind sessions to educators in **Belle Chase**, **Bossier**, **Crowley**, **Hammond**, **Lafayette**, **Natchitoches**, **Thibodaux**, and **West Monroe**. His performance indicators session provided guidance in writing performance target indicators based on Communities That Care Survey data and Student Information System discipline reports. "Principles of Effectiveness and Science-based Programs" gave participants the opportunity to review previous and new Title IV, Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities authorization requirements.
- **Clausing**, **Dearbone**, **Hanley**, **Kaigler**, and **Picou** met with education staff from the Audubon Nature Institute at the Audubon Aquarium of the Americas in **New Orleans** on April 4 to develop plans for collaboration.
- **Hanley** and education staff from the Audubon Zoo are collaborating with Bauduit Elementary in **New Orleans** to revise the school's pre-kindergarten and kindergarten science curriculum. The Orleans Parish School System designated this inner-city school as a "Signature School" for elementary science. Bauduit Elementary will base its pre-kindergarten and kindergarten curriculum on Audubon Zoo's "Zooper Kids" curriculum, which

- fosters first-time learning about animals for children ages 2 to 5.
- **Clausing, Dearbone, Picou**, and program associates **Lou Meadows** and **Debra L. Meibaum** presented a No Child Left Behind workshop to central office administrators and school principals in *Jefferson Parish* on April 24.
- On April 16, **Meibaum** and **Picou** presented “Best Practices for Classroom Instruction” to nearly 50 educators in *Itta Bena*.
- **Meibaum** provided an update on Title I, Part A, of No Child Left Behind for more than 80 administrators, central office staff, and principals in *Jackson* on April 30.

Mississippi

- SECAC consultants conducted a Reading Success Network make-and-take workshop on March 21 for K–3 teachers at Grenada School in *Grenada*.
- On March 24–25, March 31–April 1, and April 10, **Gapinski** provided technical assistance to Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) staff in *Jackson* on Title IV regulations and state education agency responsibilities. He also shared with MDE staff the latest information on regional developments and needs assessment requirements and provided assistance in planning a Title V statewide conference sponsored by SECAC and MDE.
- **Meibaum**, program specialist **Suzanne Ashby**, and program associate **Maggie Rivas** led concurrent sessions on family involvement and literacy for administrators, federal programs coordinators, principals, teachers, paraprofessionals, support staff, and parents at “Mississippi’s English Language Learners: Celebrating Our Rising Stars!” on April 1 in *Jackson*. The next day, **Meibaum** and **Rivas** participated in a meeting of a statewide committee to assist in the development of English Language Learner standards for reading and language arts.



SECAC staff presented a No Child Left Behind workshop to central office administrators and school principals in Jefferson Parish, LA, on April 24.

Special Education and Rehabilitation Services Program (SEARSP)

SEDL’s SEARSP provides information and assistance on innovations and policies to improve special education and rehabilitation services. SEARSP encompasses the National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research (NCDDR) and the Southwest Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center (Southwest DBTAC).

NCDDR works with more than 430 disability and rehabilitation research teams and product developers funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) to make their research more accessible. In partnership with these NIDRR groups, NCDDR develops and demonstrates successful methods and strategies that link researchers and information users. Through these links, NCDDR audiences may find utility and relevance in research findings. NCDDR activities include research, demonstration, technical assistance, and dissemination and utilization.

In October 2001, SEDL received funding from The Institute for Rehabilitation & Research (TIRR) in Houston to partner with Southwest DBTAC, which serves Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. The U.S. Department of Education’s NIDRR funds Southwest DBTAC regional projects through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to provide training, technical assistance, and dissemination services on ADA and other disability-related laws.

Through this TIRR subcontract, SEDL provides technical assistance, training, and information dissemination on the legal obligations of educational entities to provide accessible information technology (IT) to students and employees. This includes assistance to conduct self-evaluations on IT accessibility and the promotion of best practices.

in the field

NCDDR Activities

On April 10–12, at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in **New York City**, program manager **John Westbrook** participated in the advisory committee meeting of the New York Traumatic Brain Injury System and provided technical assistance to staff of the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Community Integration of Persons with Traumatic Brain Injury.

Communication specialist **Sean Claes** and program associate **Joann Starks** presented during the poster session at the 25th Annual National Association of Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers Conference, on April 27–29, in **Washington, DC**.

Technology Assistance Program (TAP)

SEDL's TAP assists teachers in creating student-centered classrooms supported by technologies through such projects as the SouthCentral Regional Technology in Education Consortium (SouthCentral RTEC).

SouthCentral RTEC members include the Texas Center for Educational Technology at the University of North Texas and The Aurora Project. SouthCentral RTEC staff provide professional development, technical assistance, networking, and information and resource dissemination. They help teachers use technology and enable education leaders to acquire, manage, and evaluate technology.

TAP Professional Development and Technical Assistance

Arkansas

- On March 13, Evaluation Services program associate **Jack Lumbley** conducted focus groups with Arkansas education stakeholders in **Little Rock** to determine how SouthCentral RTEC could meet their needs in mastering state content standards and using technology in the classroom, among other issues.

Oklahoma

- At an April 4 Oklahoma—Achievement through Collaboration and Technology Support presentation in **Norman**, SouthCentral RTEC staff delivered sessions on authentic teaching and learning using the *Active Learning with Technology* portfolio to principals and superintendents as part of Oklahoma's Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation State Challenge Grant for Leadership Development.

Texas

- Program associate **Marilyn Heath** presented "K–12 Interactive Videoconferencing Symposium: A National Collaborative" to 20 educators at the Texas Distance Learning Association Annual Conference on March 3–6 in **Austin**.

NCDDR Site Gets New Look, Resources

SEDL's National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research (NCDDR) has redesigned its Web site, at www.ncddr.org, to highlight NCDDR information by topic. The materials developed during the previous years of the project have been categorized into 36 topical areas of interest that are accessible through the site's main page. These topics include "Dissemination History & Framework," "Diversity and Multiculturalism," "Surveys of Dissemination Preferences and Practices," "Knowledge Management and Utilization," "Informatics," "Information Technology," and "Designing & Conducting Research." Site visitors can access NCDDR publications and National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research information from the main page.

NCDDR staff have also made additions to NCDDR's Electronic Library. Located at www.ncddr.org/forms/registrysearch.html, the electronic library houses more than 890 online resources produced by NIDRR-funded grantees and is searchable by author, title, and topic. NCDDR's La Biblioteca Electrónica, located at www.ncddr.org/espanol/index.html, contains online research-based resources available in Spanish. ■





Melissa Dodson joined ES as a program specialist in May.

- On March 5, **Lumbley** conducted focus groups with Texas education stakeholders in *Austin* to determine how SouthCentral RTEC could meet their needs in mastering state content standards and using technology in the classroom.
- Throughout March, program associate **Mary Burns** conducted Master Teachers Network sessions on the *Active Learning with Technology* portfolio as well as follow-up coaching and mentoring to teachers from Lyndon B. Johnson High School in Laredo's United Independent School District.
- In late March, program specialists **Kim Hughes** and **Danny Martinez** conducted Master Teachers Network professional development for teachers from United, United South, and Alexander high schools in *Laredo*. The training included a collaborative presentation with Texas Instruments on the use of probe-ware and hand-held computers in the science and mathematics classroom. **Hughes** and **Martinez** presented sessions on oral history and the historical architecture of the community for language arts and social science teachers, as well as *Active Learning with Technology* professional development for teachers participating in the Master Teachers Network at United South and United high schools. **Burns** and **Martinez** also delivered follow-up coaching sessions at Alexander and United South high schools. In March and April, **Lumbley** observed teachers and interviewed United Independent School

District administrators, facilitators, and teachers participating in Master Teachers Network activities. On April 9–11, **Martinez** returned to Laredo for classroom observations with 17 teachers at United South High School.

- **Hughes** presented “Technology in Learner-Centered Classrooms” at the Association of Texas Professional Educators Annual Convention on March 27–29 in *Austin*.
- **Martinez** presented “The People’s Choice: Digital Imagery and the Art of Persuasion” for 20 teachers from the Central Texas area at the Region XIII Educational Service Center in *Austin* on April 14.

Corporate Offices

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

ES staff work with every major SEDL contract as internal evaluators to design and implement evaluation plans and collect and manage performance indicator data. ES also is developing a program of external fee-for-service evaluations for a growing number of educational entities, such as universities and school districts, to document the quality and impact of programs.

Evaluation Services (ES)

SEDL's ES welcomed **Melissa Dodson** as a program specialist on May 19. Before joining SEDL, **Dodson** worked as a program evaluator for the UTeach Teacher Certification Program in the College of Natural Sciences at The University of Texas at Austin. She also has been an evaluation consultant for small educational projects at Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos and for the Board of Regents for the State of Louisiana in Baton Rouge. **Dodson** has a doctorate in educational psychology from UT–Austin. At SEDL, she evaluates SCIMAST and external projects.

Program associate **Jack Lumbley** coordinated a meeting of the Institute of Education Sciences/Cross-Laboratory REL Performance Indicators Task Force on March 21–22 in *Denver, CO*.

Office of Institutional Communications (OIC)

In early June, the December 2002 issue of *SEDL Letter*, "Putting Reading First," received the Association of Educational Publishers Distinguished Achievement Award in the category of Periodicals—One-Theme Issue. Edited by communications associate **Leslie Blair**, the issue is available online at www.sedl.org/pubs/sedl-letter/v14n03/. The magazine, which was judged on content, look, and design, competed against publications from Time for Kids, the National Endowment for the Humanities, KSA-Plus Communications, *Scholastic Magazine*, and sister REL institutions Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory and WestEd.

Office of Institutional Development (OID)

Alida Tallman, a second-year student at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at UT–Austin, joined SEDL's OID as an intern in June. **Tallman** earned her bachelor's in sociology at Rice University in Houston, where she worked for two years in the admissions office before entering the LBJ School. During her nearly three-month internship at SEDL, she is assisting OID staff with strategic planning by conducting a gap analysis, helping prioritize SEDL's development goals, and writing a summary of the corporation's planning efforts. **Tallman** also is analyzing the education research industry and building a database to collect information on SEDL's competitors and potential partners. A self-proclaimed generalist, **Tallman** said, "Even if my career doesn't lead me into the education arena, the nonprofit corporation principles I have learned here will be valuable to me in the future."



Alida Tallman began her internship in OID in June.

SEDL Fee-for-Service

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, and evaluation services.

Georgia

- On March 14, program associate **Patricia Guerra** and graduate students from UT–Austin delivered Module IV of the Organizing for Diversity Staff Development Program to more than 30 Houston County Public School teachers in **Centerville**. On April 28, **Guerra** and a UT–Austin consultant presented modules V and VI.

Illinois

- Program associates **D'Ette Cowan** and **Joe Parker** facilitated Leadership for Changing Schools professional development for administrators and teacher leaders from United Township High School in **Moline, IL**, on April 7–9.

Louisiana

- On April 28–30, in **Kenner**, **Cowan**, **Parker**, and program specialist **Tara Leo Thompson** delivered Leadership for Changing Schools professional development to educators from the Louisiana Department of Education and schools in St. Charles, Orleans, Plaquemines, and Livingston parishes.

Texas

- Guerra** and a consultant from UT–Austin delivered Module VI of the Organizing for Diversity Staff Development Program on March 27 in **Temple**. They returned on April 16 to present Module VII and the final coaching session for teachers.
- In March, SouthCentral RTEC and Evaluation Services staff began collaborating to design and conduct an evaluation of the Texas Education Technology Network. This infrastructure connects the Texas Education Agency and all 20 education service centers in Texas for interactive video and data sharing. ■

SEDL calendar

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

July

21–24 Teachers as Leaders Middle School Mathematics Academy Brownsville, TX

SCIMAST staff will partner with the Brownsville Independent School District's National Science Foundation Project staff to model effective middle school mathematics instruction and assessment practices. Contact: Como Molina

22 Teaching Thinking through Effective Questioning Training Florence, AL

SECAC staff will present a questioning strategies workshop for teachers and administrators. Contact: Jill Slack

22–25 No Child Left Behind Basics Florence, Hamilton, Jasper, and Montivello, AL

SECAC staff will provide an overview of Part A, Title I, of the No Child Left Behind Act. Contacts: Debra L. Meibaum and Dallas Picou

27–31 Summer Institute Evaluation Clarksville, AR

ES staff will evaluate the summer institute at the University of the Ozarks for the Great Expectations of Arkansas and A+ Schools Program. Contact: Jeannine Turner

28– Aug. 1 Excellence in Health and Education Project Institute Hammond, LA

SECAC and Southeastern Louisiana University will co-sponsor this institute for teachers, counselors, nutritionists, and others. Contact: Philip Gapinski

29–30 Teaching Thinking through Effective Questioning Training Walnut Ridge, AR

SECAC staff will conduct a questioning workshop at the Northeast Arkansas Educational Cooperative Center. Contact: Jill Slack

30–31 Midway TAKS Workshop Waco, TX

REL staff will provide professional development on reading and writing strategies that are aligned with the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) for Midway middle school teachers. Contact: Marsha Loyd

August

1 World Technology Conference Phoenix, AZ

SouthCentral RTEC staff will present "Digital Portfolios and Student Learning" at this international technology conference sponsored by Arizona State University. Contact: Vicki Dimock

5 & 21 Teaching Thinking through Effective Questioning Training Paris, AR, and Westwego, LA

SECAC staff will conduct a questioning workshop for middle school teachers and administrators. Contact: Jill Slack

26–27 Knowledge Dissemination and Utilization Project Directors Meeting Arlington, VA

NCDDR staff will participate in this meeting. Contact: Lin Harris

27 SECAC Mathematics Inservice Sunflower, MS

SECAC staff will conduct an inservice on algebraic expressions and thinking, problem solving, and measurement for Sunflower faculty. Contact: Debra L. Meibaum

September

3 SCIMAST Consortia Advisory Board Meeting
Little Rock, AR
 SCIMAST staff will meet with their Consortia Advisory Board to review SCIMAST work over the past year and plan for the upcoming year. Contact: Vicki Dimock

3–5, 9–12, & 16–17 Tools for Assessing and Teaching Writing
Decatur, AL
 SECAC staff will conduct workshops for K–7 teachers on district writing benchmarks and strategies for teaching writing. Contact: Jill Slack

4–5 SCIMAST Fall Forum
Little Rock, AR
 SCIMAST staff will host this forum for 150 educators from across the region on the use of technology in mathematics and science education. Contact: Vicki Dimock

15–16 & 17 English Language Learner Strategies for Teachers Training
Brandon and Sunflower, MS
 SECAC staff will present strategies on English Language Learner (ELL) instruction to administrators, teachers, and support staff. They also will conduct ELL parental involvement training in Brandon on Sept. 18–19. Contact: Maggie Rivas

19–22 Texas Association of School Boards/Texas Association of School Administrators Convention
Austin, TX
 OIC staff will host a SEDL booth during this meeting. Contact: Jill Dodge

22–23 SEDL 2003 Policy Forum
Oklahoma City, OK
 REL staff will host “Teacher Resources and Student Success” for policymakers and policy influencers in SEDL’s region. Contact: Zena Rudo

23 Teaching Thinking through Effective Questioning Training
Westwego, LA
 SECAC staff will conduct a questioning workshop for K–6 faculty. Contact: Jill Slack

October

15 Teaching Thinking through Effective Questioning Training
Little Rock, AR
 SECAC staff will conduct a follow-up training of trainers for Arkansas Educational Co-op teacher center coordinators. Contact: Jill Slack

22–24 Active Learning with Technology Institute
Austin, TX
 SouthCentral RTEC staff will present this institute for professional development providers. Contact: Vicki Dimock

SEDL LINKS

Wesley A. Hoover	Joan L. Buttram	Joyce S. Pollard	Johanna Gilmore	SEDL
President and CEO	Executive Vice President and COO	Director, Office of Communications	Editor	800-476-6861 www.sedl.org

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