



REL Pacific E-News Vol. 1, No. 2

Welcome to the REL Pacific Fall 2008 E-News!

The **Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific (REL Pacific)** is 1 of 10 regional educational laboratories funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The purpose of the REL Pacific is to carry out applied educational research, development, dissemination, and technical assistance activities to serve the diverse needs of the Pacific region. Our service area encompasses American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM; Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap), Guam, Hawai'i, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Republic of Palau.

REL Pacific E-News is a quarterly e-newsletter designed to inform readers of current and emerging educational issues at local, state, and regional levels. At REL Pacific, we work closely with schools, districts, and other agencies to develop creative and practical solutions for important educational challenges. We are interested in both sharing our current work with you and hearing from you regarding the pressing educational needs in your community.

Visit REL Pacific's website (www.prel.org/programs/care/rel.aspx) or contact REL Pacific directly at (800) 377-4773 or (808) 441-1300 for information about current research and policy affecting the Pacific region. We wish to hear from you regarding research projects, studies, and technical assistance activities that may be of interest to your state educational agency or local school district.

Recently Published at REL Pacific: Issues & Answers

Issues & Answers is an ongoing series of reports from short-term Fast Response Projects conducted by the regional educational laboratories on current education issues of importance at local, state, and regional levels. All *Issues & Answers* reports undergo a rigorous external peer review to ensure that they meet the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) standards for scientifically valid research.

A Status Report on Middle School Mathematics Assessment and Student Achievement in the Pacific Region

This descriptive and awareness-building Fast Response Project reports on current levels of student achievement in middle school mathematics in the U.S.-affiliated Pacific. The findings provide a portrait of the types of mathematic assessments used in grades 7 and 8 in the Pacific region and a report of how well students are performing.

Authors: Roger Chesswas, PhD and Lesley Lee, PhD

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL_2008043.pdf

Recently Published at REL Pacific: REL Technical Briefs

REL Technical Briefs compose the newest series of reports from Fast Response Projects. These reports are designed to help educators and others obtain quick, focused, evidence-based answers to their specific requests for information on pressing education issues. All *REL Technical Briefs* are peer reviewed to ensure that they meet IES standards for scientifically valid research.

The Status of Large-Scale Assessment in the Pacific Region

This descriptive study identifies assessment measures and practices used in each of the 10 REL Pacific jurisdictions: American Samoa, CNMI, FSM, Guam, Hawai'i, RMI, and the Republic of Palau. For each jurisdiction, the study identifies: (a) currently used large-scale assessment measures, (b) whether these measures are norm- or criterion-referenced, (c) content areas assessed, (d) the languages used in the assessments, (e) grade levels at which tests are administered, (f) frequency of administration, and (g) when they are administered.

Authors: Jennifer Ryan and Scott Keir, PhD

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/techbrief/tr_00308.pdf

The Status of the Preparation and Hiring of School Principals in the U.S.-Affiliated Pacific Region

This technical brief describes the current status of the preparation and hiring of school principals in the U.S.-affiliated Pacific. The brief answers a central question: *what academic, practice-based, and standards and policy criteria are used in the preparation and hiring of principals?* Findings revealed that many jurisdictions had relatively recent certification standards and policies, and the procedures and criteria for preparing and hiring school principals vary across jurisdictions in models, requirements, and implementation levels. The only requirements common to all 10 jurisdictions are that principals must complete some college-level coursework and have teaching experience.

Authors: Sharon Camblin, EdD and Scott Keir, PhD

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/techbrief/tr_00608.pdf

Current REL Pacific Rigorous Research Study

Principles-Based Professional Development to Improve Reading Comprehension for English Language Learners

As part of its Task 2, *rigorous applied research and development*, REL Pacific is carrying out a 5-year rigorous study of the effectiveness of a professional development model, Pacific Communities with High-performance In Literacy Development (Pacific CHILD). The study involves the implementation of a professional development program for 4th and 5th grade teachers, with a particular focus on English language learners (ELLs). The model of Pacific CHILD was based on lessons learned from and results of REL Pacific's 2001–2005 Pacific CHILD research on early literacy. The Pacific CHILD professional development program is focusing on three key reading comprehension strategies coupled with three key instructional strategies.

The REL Pacific is using a cluster, random assignment research design with an equal number of schools receiving and not receiving the professional development. Pacific CHILD staff will sample approximately 50 schools (composed of about 250 teachers and 5,800 students) in three jurisdictions across the Pacific region. In particular, the study addresses the following research questions: *Do teachers who participate in the intervention improve their content knowledge and classroom instructional skills? Does the reading comprehension of students of these teachers improve?* The study will assess outcomes for schools, teachers, and students by conducting a carefully developed statistical analysis to determine whether there are differences in outcomes between treatment and control schools, teachers, and students that can be traced to the Pacific CHILD professional development program.

Recently Published at Other Laboratories: Issues & Answers

Preparing Teachers to Teach in Rural Schools (REL Central)

Rural schools face difficulties in recruiting and retaining a highly qualified teacher workforce. Potential contributing factors cited by this report include social and collegial isolation, low salaries, and multiple grade or subject teaching assignments. The authors argue that together, these challenges can discourage teachers from accepting rural positions or cause them to leave rural settings after teaching there for only a short time. This Fast Response Project describes in detail

how nine teacher preparation programs in the REL Central region are preparing their graduates for teaching positions in rural settings.

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/central/pdf/REL_2008045.pdf

Preparing to Serve English Language Learner Students: School Districts with Emerging English Language Learner Communities (REL Appalachia)

This *Issues and Answers* report aims to help school districts deal with the challenges of newly enrolling or rapidly increasing English language learner (ELL) students by offering background information and sharing the experiences of districts that have addressed similar challenges in providing services and infrastructure to support the success of ELL students.

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/appalachia/pdf/REL_2008049front.pdf

Featured Website: Edlabs

The Regional Educational Laboratory Program consists of a network of 10 laboratories that serve the educational needs of a designated region. Each laboratory generates a series of reports to provide educators and policymakers with credible, scientifically based research on a regular basis. The ***Edlabs homepage*** provides detailed information about each laboratory (under the Labs menu tab) as well as publications and products from the labs.

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/>

A recent technical assistance service available from the Edlabs website is ***Ask A REL***, a new collaborative reference desk service provided by the 10 regional educational laboratories. By design, Ask A REL is to function much in the same way as a technical reference library. Questions submitted to Ask A REL are reviewed by laboratory experts who then provide references, referrals, and brief responses on research-based education questions.

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/askarel/index.asp>

Featured Website: National Center for Education Statistics

The ***National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)*** is located within the U.S. Department of Education and the Institute of Education Sciences. It is the primary federal entity for collecting, analyzing, and publishing data related to education in the United States. The NCES also conducts studies on international comparisons of education statistics and maintains the Data Analysis System (DAS), which provides access to U.S. education survey data.

<http://nces.ed.gov/>

Submit a Service Request to REL Pacific

If you have an idea for a Fast Response Project that reflects a high-priority education issue in your jurisdiction, please submit a service request to REL Pacific through our online service request site: www.prel.org/contactprel/service-request-form.aspx

We look forward to hearing from you!

This material was prepared under contract number ED-06-CO-0024 by the Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific, administered by Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL). The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) or the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government.