

REL Program Research Reports Related to ARRA Assurances



With heightened attention given to spending as an investment in long-term school improvement, particularly as associated with the use of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds and the speed with which the spending must occur, educational decision-makers need ready access to high quality research reports more than ever. This document was developed to aid in this goal by providing a speedy reference guide to Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) reports, organized alphabetically under the four assurances, the key school reforms of ARRA:

- 1. Making progress towards rigorous college- and career-ready *standards* and high quality *assessments* that are valid and reliable for all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities;**
- 2. Establishing pre-K-to college and career *data systems* that track progress and foster continuous improvement;**
- 3. Making improvement in *teacher effectiveness* and in the *equitable distribution of qualified teachers* for all students, particularly students who are most in need; and**
- 4. Providing intensive support and effective intervention for the *lowest-performing schools*.**

For more information about the education provisions of ARRA, please see the U.S. Department of Education's website at www.ed.gov/recovery/.

The U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences operates the REL Program to provide educators and policymakers access to scientifically valid research. The REL Program is a network of ten laboratories, each serving the educational needs of its designated region through three core activities: 1) applied research and development projects, 2) rigorous studies, and 3) other related technical assistance activities. For more information on the REL Program and the types of reports that are produced in response to regional needs and requests, please visit the national website at <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/>.

REL Program Research Reports Related to ARRA Assurances

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) requires states to address four assurances that evidence shows make a critical contribution to student results. The **Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Program** offers resources to districts and states related to these four assurances.

ARRA Assurance 1: Rigorous Standards and Quality Assessments

#	Report	Date	REL	Description
In Your Region - REL Pacific				
1	A Status Report on Middle School Mathematics Assessment and Student Achievement in the Pacific Region	January 2008	Pacific	This study answers one basic question: What is the status of student achievement in middle school mathematics in the Pacific Region jurisdictions? The findings provide a portrait of the types of mathematic assessments used in grades 7 and 8 and of how well students are performing.
1	English Language Proficiency Assessment in the Pacific Region	June 2007	Pacific	Using various approaches to identify English language learners, several Pacific Region jurisdictions are developing English language proficiency standards and assessments aligned with those standards. Others are working on content standards, including language arts, and have expressed interest in developing English language proficiency standards but lack formal assessment mechanisms.
1	The Status of Large-Scale Assessment in the Pacific Region	July 2008	Pacific	This technical brief describes the large-scale assessment measures and practices used in the jurisdictions served by the Pacific Regional Educational Laboratory. The need for effective large-scale assessment was identified as a major priority for improving student achievement in the Pacific Region jurisdictions: American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia (Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap), the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Republic of Palau (National Education Association 2007; Pacific Regional Advisory Committee 2005; South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment 2008).
Across the REL Network				
1	Achievement Gap Patterns of Grade 8 American Indian and Alaska Native Students in Reading and Mathematics	July 2009	Northwest	Focusing on student proficiency in reading and math from 2003/04 to 2006/07, this report compares gaps in performance on state achievement tests between grade 8 American Indian and Alaska Native students and all other grade 8 students in 26 states serving large populations of American Indian and Alaska Native students. The results indicate that in most states both American Indian and Alaska Native students and all other students experienced achievement gains across the study period. Although achievement gaps were generally found to persist, the American Indian and Alaska Native students were at least keeping pace by increasing in achievement along with all other students.

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ARRA Assurance 1: Rigorous Standards and Quality Assessments

#	Report	Date	REL	Description
Across the REL Network				
1	Aligning Mathematics Assessment Standards: Arkansas and the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)	October 2008	Southwest	This Technical Brief examines the current alignment between the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program (ACTAAP) mathematics assessment standards and the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) mathematics framework. It looks at the extent to which current state assessment standards cover the content on which 2009 NAEP assessments will be based. Applying the methodology used by Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest in 2007 in a similar study that examined the alignment of ACTAAP science assessment standards with the 2009 NAEP, this study presents results for areas of full alignment, partial alignment, nonalignment, and areas where the ACTAAP assessment standards go beyond the NAEP standards. The study finds that 78 percent of NAEP grade 4, 84 percent of NAEP grade 8, and 72 percent of NAEP grade 12 assessment standards are either fully or partially addressed by the ACTAAP assessment standards.
1	Aligning Mathematics Assessment Standards: Louisiana and the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)	October 2008	Southwest	This technical brief examines the current alignment between the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) and Graduation Exit Examination (GEE) mathematics assessment standards and the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) mathematics framework. It looks at the extent to which current state assessment standards cover the content on which 2009 NAEP assessments will be based. Applying the methodology used by Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest in 2007 in a similar study that examined the alignment of LEAP and GEE science assessment standards with the 2009 NAEP, this study presents results for areas of full alignment, partial alignment, nonalignment, and areas where the LEAP and GEE assessment standards go beyond the NAEP standards. The study finds that 91 percent of NAEP grade 4, 90 percent of NAEP grade 8, and 72 percent of NAEP grade 12 assessment standards are either fully or partially addressed by the LEAP or GEE mathematics assessment standards.
1	Aligning Mathematics Assessment Standards: New Mexico and the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)	October 2008	Southwest	This technical brief examines the current alignment between the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (NMSBA) assessment standards and the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) mathematics framework. It looks at the extent to which current state assessment standards cover the content on which 2009 NAEP assessments will be based. Applying the methodology used by Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest in 2007 in a similar study that examined the alignment of New Mexico science standards with the 2009 NAEP, this study presents results for areas of full alignment, partial alignment, nonalignment, and areas where the NMSBA assessment standards go beyond the NAEP standards. The study finds that 92 percent of NAEP grade 4, 94 percent of NAEP grade 8, and 80 percent of NAEP grade 12 assessment standards (aligned with current NMSBA assessment standards) and 77 percent of NAEP grade 12 assessment standards (aligned with proposed NMSBA assessment standards) are either fully or partially addressed by the NMSBA assessment standards.

To view all REL Program research reports, visit <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/>.

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Across the REL Network				
1	Aligning Mathematics Assessment Standards: Oklahoma and the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)	October 2008	Southwest	This technical brief examines the current alignment between Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests (OCCT) and the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) mathematics framework. It looks at the extent to which current state assessment standards cover the content on which 2009 NAEP assessments will be based. Applying the methodology used by Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest in 2001 in a similar study that examined the alignment of Oklahoma science assessment standards with the 2009 NAEP, this study presents results for areas of full alignment, partial alignment, nonalignment, and areas where the OCCT assessment standards go beyond the NAEP standards. The study finds that 85 percent of NAEP grade 4, 89 percent of NAEP grade 8, and 74 percent of NAEP grade 12 assessment standards are either fully or partially addressed by the OCCT mathematics assessment standards.
1	Aligning Mathematics Assessment Standards: Texas and the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)	October 2008	Southwest	This Technical Brief examines the alignment between the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) mathematics assessment standards and the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) mathematics framework. It looks at the extent to which current state assessment standards cover the content on which 2009 NAEP assessments will be based. Applying the methodology used by Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest in 2007 in a similar study that examined the alignment of TAKS science assessment standards with the 2009 NAEP, this study presents results for areas of full alignment, partial alignment, nonalignment, and areas where the TAKS assessment standards go beyond the NAEP standards. The study finds that 74 percent of the NAEP grade 4, 81 percent of the NAEP grade 8, and 71 percent of the NAEP grade 12 assessment standards are either fully or partially addressed by the TAKS assessment standards.
1	Aligning Science Standards and the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress in the Southwest Region: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arkansas ▪ Louisiana ▪ Oklahoma ▪ New Mexico ▪ Texas 	July 2007	Southwest	These research documents are intended for policymakers in Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas to use when examining possible changes to their state assessment's alignment with the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The 2009 NAEP test is not yet in existence, so the purpose of this report is to give policymakers a head start in determining where they might, if they so decide, begin to make changes in their assessment standards and specifications to develop an assessment system more closely aligned with that used for the NAEP.

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ARRA Assurance 1: Rigorous Standards and Quality Assessments

#	Report	Date	REL	Description
Across the REL Network				
1	Alternate Assessments for Special Education Students in the Southwest Region States	February 2008	Southwest	In 2003, the U.S. Department of Education issued regulations allowing states to develop alternate standards and assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. This study reviews and summarizes alternate assessment policies and practices and their implementation and impact for the most significantly cognitively disabled students, across the five states in the Southwest Region.
1	Analysis of Title IIB Mathematics and Science Partnerships in the Northwest Region	June 2007	Northwest	This report describes the first year of the funded professional development activities in the Title IIB Math and Science Partnership projects in the Northwest Region and the evaluation models. The analysis is structured around the factors of professional development associated with changes in teacher knowledge and practice.
1	Analyzing Performance by Hispanic High School Students on the Massachusetts State Assessment	June 2009	Northeast & Islands	The report examines Hispanic high school students' performance on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System tests in English language arts and mathematics over 2002/03–2005/06. It compares the scores of grade 10 Hispanic and non-Hispanic students and uses multilevel regressions to examine associations between the Hispanic students' scores and student- and school-level characteristics.
1	A Review of Avoidable Losses: High Stakes Accountability and the Dropout Crisis	February 2008	Southwest	REL Southwest received a request to review the report <i>Avoidable Losses: High Stakes Accountability and the Dropout Crisis</i> to assess the soundness of the study methodology and the appropriateness of the conclusions drawn in the report. The review by REL Southwest found that the authors made strong causal conclusions about the effect of Texas's test-based accountability system on the high school dropout rates: that the accountability system directly increases dropout rates throughout the state. Given the nature of the data collected and analyzed in this study, such conclusions cannot be scientifically validated.
1	A Review Of Methods and Instruments Used In State and Local School Readiness Evaluations	August 2007	Southeast	This report provides detailed information about the methods and instruments used to evaluate school readiness initiatives, discusses important considerations in selecting instruments, and provides resources and recommendations that may be helpful to those who are designing and implementing school readiness evaluations.
1	Assessing the Likelihood Virginia Public Schools will Meet the Central Goal of No Child Left Behind: Having Every Student Proficient	September 2007	Appalachia	This report investigates progress in Virginia public schools in satisfying the requirement of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 that every student be proficient in reading and math by 2014. It develops a variable change model that uses observed baseline proficiency and proficiency trends at individual schools to forecast gains for six subgroups in elementary, middle, and high schools.

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Across the REL Network				
1	Calculating the Ability of Within-School Teacher Supply to Meet the Demands of New Requirements: The Example of the Michigan Merit Curriculum	July 2008	Midwest	Representatives from the Michigan Department of Education and the Center for Educational Performance and Information requested assistance in estimating Michigan's capacity to adequately staff its high schools to meet the course requirements of the new Michigan Merit Curriculum. The study team devised a formula to estimate the number of additional full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers needed for each subject at each Michigan high school. The formula was calculated using Michigan-specific values for key variables. Such an analysis may be particularly useful when new graduation or course requirements are being planned. Schools can adjust the variables in the formula (such as class size and number of periods taught by each FTE teacher) to fit their own needs.
1	"Coach" Can Mean Many Things: Five Categories of Literacy Coaches in Reading First	June 2007	Northwest	Simply knowing that literacy coaches are in schools does not imply anything about how those individuals spend their time. This report draws on surveys and interviews with Reading First coaches in five western states and describes what they emphasize in their work and how they spend their time. While on average, the coaches reported spending 28 percent of their time directly coaching teachers, there was substantial variation among coaches.
1	Formative Assessment Policies, Programs, and Practices in the Southwest Region	January 2008	Southwest	Formative assessments help educators target instructional practices to meet specific student needs and monitor and support student progress toward valued state learning outcomes. Policies and programs in the five Southwest Region states suggest a range of strategies to support the development and use of formative assessments.
1	Gender Gaps in Assessment Outcomes in Vermont and the United States	August 2008	Northeast & Islands	Using data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP), the report examines how gender gaps differ between Vermont NAEP scores and U.S. NAEP scores and between Vermont NAEP and NECAP scores in grades 4 and 8. Overall and disaggregated by poverty and disability status, gender achievement gaps in Vermont resembled those in the country as a whole except in a few cases.
1	High School Standards and Expectations for College and the Workplace	June 2008	Central	State standards for high schools in a majority of Central Region states cover 82 percent of the language arts topics but just 57 percent of the mathematics topics identified by both of two national studies as important for success in college and the workplace.
1	Measuring How Benchmark Assessments Affect Student Achievement	December 2007	Northeast & Islands	This report examines a Massachusetts pilot program for quarterly benchmark exams in middle-school mathematics, finding that program schools do not show greater gains in student achievement after a year. But that finding might reflect limited data rather than ineffective benchmark assessments.

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1	(A Second Follow-up Year for) Measuring how Benchmark Assessments Affect Student Achievement	April 2008	Northeast & Islands	This REL Technical Brief examines whether, after two years of implementation, schools in Massachusetts using quarterly benchmark exams aligned with state standards in middle school mathematics showed greater gains in student achievement than those not doing so. A quasi-experimental design, using covariate matching and comparative interrupted time-series techniques, was used to assess school differences in changes in mathematics performance between program and comparison schools. Following up on an earlier Issues & Answers report, with just one year of post-implementation data, the study found no significant differences between schools using this practice and those not doing so after two years.
1	New Measures of English Language Proficiency and Their Relationship to Performance on Large-Scale Content Assessments	January 2009	Northeast & Islands	Using assessment results for 5th and 8th grade English language learner students in three Northeast and Island Region states, the report finds that the English language domains of reading and writing (as measured by a proficiency assessment) are significant predictors of performance on reading, writing, and mathematics assessments and that the domains of reading and writing (literacy skills) are more closely associated with performance than are the English language domains of speaking and listening (oral skills).
1	Performance Patterns for Students with Disabilities in Grade 4 Mathematics Education in Massachusetts	August 2008	Northeast & Islands	This report-analyzing the mathematics performance of grade 4 students with disabilities in Massachusetts across several metrics (by locale-need combination categories, in top-performing schools, and relative to general education students)-finds that the proportion of students with disabilities scoring proficient fell by less than 1 percentage point between 2004 and 2006. The proficiency gap between general education students and students with disabilities was 30 percentage points in 2006 and decreased by almost 2 percentage points over the period.
1	Performance Patterns for Students with Disabilities in Grade 4 Mathematics Education in New York State	August 2008	Northeast & Islands	This report describes the mathematics performance of grade 4 students with disabilities across schools categorized by need-to-resource capacity and compares their performance by school with that of general education students across New York State from 2003 to 2005. It finds that the percentage of students with disabilities scoring proficient increased over time and that the proficiency gap between this subgroup and general education students narrowed by 1 percentage point.
1	The Predictive Validity of Selected Benchmark Assessments Used in the Mid-Atlantic Region	November 2007	Mid-Atlantic	This report examines the availability and quality of predictive validity data for a selection of benchmark assessments identified by state and district personnel as in use within Mid-Atlantic Region jurisdictions. The report finds that evidence is generally lacking of their predictive validity with respect to state assessment tests.

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#	Report	Date	REL	Description
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1	What States Can Learn About State Standards and Assessment Systems from No Child Left Behind Documents and Interviews with Central Region Assessment Directors	March 2008	Central	The purpose of this study is to describe the No Child Left Behind requirements for state standards and assessment systems. It examined official documents and peer review decision letters and included interviews with state assessment directors in the Central Region to highlight the challenges states face in developing and implementing approved systems.

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ARRA Assurance 2: Development and Use of Comprehensive Data Systems

#	Report	Date	REL	Description
Across the REL Network				
2	Course-taking Patterns and Preparation for Postsecondary Education in California's Public University Systems Among Minority Youth	January 2008	West	This report finds that the high school program for college preparation begins in 9th grade and that making up missed preparatory courses and academic content is likely to be difficult for students who put off college-preparatory work until later in their high school career.
2	Examining the Links Between Grade 12 Mathematics Coursework and Mathematics Remediation in Nevada Public Colleges and Universities	July 2008	West	This study examines the links between Nevada's grade 12 mathematics courses and remedial mathematics courses in Nevada's public colleges and universities. It analyzes remediation rates by students' highest grade 12 mathematics course level and mathematics grade point average and by various student and school characteristics.
2	Getting the Evidence for Evidence-Based Initiatives: How the Midwest States Use Data Systems to Improve Education Processes and Outcomes	June 2007	Midwest	States in the Midwest Region are developing innovative approaches to collecting and providing access to high-quality data in order to improve educational decisionmaking. Additional capacity-building and increased technical assistance at the state and local levels would enhance this work.
2	How State Education Agencies in the Northeast and Islands Region Support Data-Driven Decision Making in Districts and Schools	May 2009	Northeast & Islands	The report examines the initiatives of state education agencies in the Northeast and Islands Region to support data-driven decision making in districts and schools and describes the service providers hired to support this work. The report identifies four components of data-driven decision making initiatives and finds that not all initiatives include all four.
2	How the Government Defines Rural and Implications for Education Policies and Practices	June 2007	Southwest	Clearly defining what rural means has tangible implications for public policies and practices in education, from establishing resource needs to achieving the goals of No Child Left Behind in rural areas. Six definitions of rural are commonly applied in different contexts.

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ARRA Assurance 2: Development and Use of Comprehensive Data Systems

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Across the REL Network				
2	New Data Needed: Improving Survey Research On Two-Year College Experiences	August 2007	Midwest	Research can improve understanding of two-year colleges, but new detailed indicators are needed to capture the complexities of this changing sector.

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ARRA Assurance 3: Teacher Effectiveness and Equitable Distribution of Teachers

#	Report	Date	REL	Description
In Your Region - REL Pacific				
3	Preparing and Licensing High Quality Teachers in Pacific Region Jurisdictions	September 2007	Pacific	The Pacific Region needs more highly qualified teachers, but current teacher preparation and training programs and certification and licensing processes are not meeting this need.
3	The Status of the Preparation and Hiring of School Principals in the U.S.-Affiliated Pacific Region	August 2008	Pacific	This technical brief describes the current status of the preparation and hiring of school principals in the Pacific Region—American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap), Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Republic of Palau. The brief answers a central question: what academic, practice-based, and standards and policy criteria are used in the preparation and hiring of principals? It finds that many jurisdictions had relatively recent certification standards and policies and that 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 must have teaching experience.
Across the REL Network				
3	A Multistate Review of Professional Teaching Standards	July 2009	West	This review of teaching standards in six states—California, Florida, Illinois, North Carolina, Ohio, and Texas—focuses on the structure, target audience, and selected content of the standards to inform California’s revision of its teaching standards. The report was developed at the request of key education agencies in California.
3	An Analysis of State Data on the Distribution of Teaching Assignments Filled by Highly Qualified Teachers in New York Schools	April 2008	Northeast & Islands	New York rural schools and districts have a high percentage of core teaching assignments filled by highly qualified teachers, with only small differences across key factors such as school poverty and school need for improvement. Urban schools—particularly those in New York City—have fewer core assignments filled by highly qualified teachers.
3	Analysis of Title IIB Mathematics and Science Partnerships in the Northwest Region	June 2007	Northwest	This report describes the first year of the funded professional development activities in the Title IIB Math and Science Partnership projects in the Northwest Region and the evaluation models. The analysis is structured around the factors of professional development associated with changes in teacher knowledge and practice.

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#	Report	Date	REL	Description
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3	"Coach" Can Mean Many Things: Five Categories of Literacy Coaches in Reading First	June 2007	Northwest	Simply knowing that literacy coaches are in schools does not imply anything about how those individuals spend their time. This report draws on surveys and interviews with Reading First coaches in five western states and describes what they emphasize in their work and how they spend their time. While on average, the coaches reported spending 28 percent of their time directly coaching teachers, there was substantial variation among coaches.
3	Calculating the Ability of Within-School Teacher Supply to Meet the Demands of New Requirements: The Example of the Michigan Merit Curriculum	July 2008	Midwest	Representatives from the Michigan Department of Education and the Center for Educational Performance and Information requested assistance in estimating Michigan's capacity to adequately staff its high schools to meet the course requirements of the new Michigan Merit Curriculum. The study team devised a formula to estimate the number of additional full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers needed for each subject at each Michigan high school. The formula was calculated using Michigan-specific values for key variables. Such an analysis may be particularly useful when new graduation or course requirements are being planned. Schools can adjust the variables in the formula (such as class size and number of periods taught by each FTE teacher) to fit their own needs.
3	Developing the "Compendium of Strategies to Reduce Teacher Turnover in the Northeast and Islands Region": a Companion to the Database	October 2008	Northeast & Islands	This report provides state-, regional-, and district-level decision makers in the Northeast and Islands Region with a description of the Compendium of Strategies to Reduce Teacher Turnover in the Northeast and Islands Region, a searchable database of selected profiles of retention strategies implemented in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, and Vermont.
3	Examining Context and Challenges in Measuring Investment in Professional Development: A Case Study of Six School Districts in the Southwest Region	September 2008	Southwest	This study is an exploratory inquiry into the context and challenges of measuring investment in professional development in six Southwest Region school districts. The study estimated annual spending of approximately \$150-\$600 per pupil-or 2-9 percent of total spending. These figures likely underestimate the full investment in professional development in these districts because of the inability to track more integrated professional development activity that is a natural part of a teacher's work day or week.
3	Examining District Guidance to Schools on Teacher Evaluation Policies in the Midwest Region	November 2007	Midwest	This descriptive study provides a snapshot of teacher evaluation policies across a demographically diverse sample of districts in the Midwest Region. It aims to lay the groundwork for further research and inform conversations about current policies at the local, district, and state levels.

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3	Preparing Elementary School Teachers in the Southeast Region to Work with Students with Disabilities	November 2008	Southeast	The report is intended for state education policymakers and representatives of teacher preparation programs in institutions, colleges, and departments of education focusing on advancing teacher preparedness to work with student of varying abilities in the general education classroom. The study examines the extent to which elementary education teacher preparation programs in 36 randomly selected colleges and universities in the six Southeast Region states integrate content related to students with disabilities. The study finds most programs require one disability-focused course, two-thirds incorporate fieldwork related to students with disabilities, and more than half incorporate disability content into their mission statements.
3	Preparing Teachers to Teach in Rural Schools	July 2008	Central	The Central Region states have greater percentages of rural students and schools than the U.S. average. This report describes how nine teacher preparation programs in the region prepare their graduates for teaching positions in rural settings.
3	Reviewing the Evidence On How Teacher Professional Development Affects Student Achievement	October 2007	Southwest	Of the more than 1,300 studies identified as potentially addressing the effect of teacher professional development on student achievement in three key content areas, nine meet What Works Clearinghouse evidence standards, attesting to the paucity of rigorous studies that directly examine this link. This report finds that teachers who receive substantial professional development—an average of 49 hours in the nine studies—can boost their students' achievement by about 21 percentile points.
3	State Policies on Teacher Evaluation Practices in the Midwest Region	July 2008	Midwest	This REL Technical Brief describes state-level policies and procedural requirements for guiding teacher evaluation practices at the district level in the seven states served by the Midwest Regional Educational Laboratory: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Building on the Issues & Answers report Examining district guidance to schools on teacher evaluation policies in the Midwest Region (Brandt et al. 2007), this technical brief reveals how teacher evaluation practices are addressed by state policies and other state-level initiatives that include teacher evaluation features.
3	The Distribution of Teaching and Learning Resources in California's Middle and High Schools	September 2007	West	Access to important educational resources in California's middle and high schools is not equal among schools that serve different student populations. Overall, the most disadvantaged populations of middle and high school students are likely to have the least access to the resources necessary for learning.

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Across the REL Network				
3	Training Early Intervention Assistants in California's Community Colleges	September 2008	West	This study examines California's efforts to foster preservice preparation of early intervention assistants for infants and toddlers with special needs through the Community College Personnel Preparation Project, a certificate program offered by participating community colleges. The study finds that colleges could develop preservice training programs for early intervention assistants that meet requirements such as those for awarding a Chancellor's certificate, although not all participating colleges were successful, despite receiving state funding for startup expenses.
3	Trends in California Teacher Demand: A County and Regional Perspective	July 2008	West	The report highlights the differences among California's counties and regions in their use of underprepared teachers and their needs for new teachers in the coming decade as driven by projected student enrollment changes and teacher retirements. The findings show county and regional variations in key factors that influence teacher labor markets.

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ARRA Assurance 4: Improving Low Performing Schools

#	Report	Date	REL	Description
Across the REL Network				
4	An Analysis of Utah's K–3 Reading Improvement Program	June 2007	West	More districts and charter schools in Utah reported implementing key elements of the state literacy framework and meeting their own goals in Year 2 of the Reading Improvement Program.
4	A Description of Foundation Skills Interventions for Struggling Middle-grade Readers in Four Urban Northeast and Islands Region School Districts	February 2008	Northeast & Islands	This study describes how four midsize urban school districts in the Northeast and Islands Region were providing foundation skills assessments and programs to struggling middle-grade readers. Researchers found variations, but also some similarities, in the districts' use of tests and programs.
4	Characteristics of Arizona School Districts in Improvement	July 2008	West	This descriptive analysis provides a statistical profile of Arizona's lowest performing school districts, which can inform the context for district improvement as Arizona rolls out and refines its district intervention strategies.
4	Characteristics of California School Districts in Program Improvement	July 2008	West	This descriptive analysis provides a statistical profile of California's Title I school districts in program improvement. As an independent analysis of these districts in the aggregate, it is intended to inform the context for district improvement as California rolls out and refines its district intervention strategies.
4	Characteristics of California School Districts in Program Improvement: 2008 Update	October 2008	West	This descriptive analysis updates an earlier study of California's Title I school districts in program improvement. California's accountability system continues to identify problems at the district level overlooked at the school level.
4	Evidence-Based Decision-making: Assessing Reading Across the Curriculum Interventions	June 2007	Southeast	When selecting interventions, educators should consider the extent of the evidence base on intervention effectiveness and the fit with the school or district context, whether they are purchasing a product from vendors or developing it internally. This report also provides guidance in the decisionmaking process of selecting interventions. More specifically, this report takes a detailed look at seven reading across the curriculum interventions states and districts might consider in their plans to improve reading outcomes at the secondary level.
4	Five States' Efforts to Improve Adolescent Literacy	April 2009	Northeast & Islands	This report describes efforts by five states—Alabama, Florida, Kentucky, New Jersey, and Rhode Island—to improve adolescent literacy. Highlighting common challenges and lessons, the report examines how each state has engaged key stakeholders, set rigorous goals and standards, aligned resources to support adolescent literacy goals, built educator capacity, and used data to measure progress.

REL Program Research Reports Related to ARRA Assurances

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ARRA Assurance 4: Improving Low Performing Schools

#	Report	Date	REL	Description
Across the REL Network				
4	High School Dropout and Graduation Rates in the Central Region	July 2008	Central	This report presents comprehensive and detailed information on grades 7-12 dropout rates and on high school graduation rates in the Central Region. Dropout and graduation rates are presented for the region as a whole and for each state in the region, by gender, race/ethnicity, locale, and grade. The rates provide a comprehensive reference for state and local educators and policymakers on the student subgroups most at risk of not completing high school.
4	How Eight State Education Agencies in the Northeast and Islands Region Identify and Support Low-Performing Schools and Districts	March 2009	Northeast & Islands	This report describes and analyzes how eight state education agencies in the Northeast and Islands Region—those of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, and Vermont—identify and support low-performing schools and districts under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Focusing on direct state supports and interventions, the report finds that the eight agencies have created supports and rationales to put federally defined accountability principles into practice in response to their specific contexts, local needs, and capacities.
4	How Northwest Region States Are Responding To Schools In Need of Improvement	August 2007	Northwest	This descriptive study examines the systems of technical assistance and support that Northwest Region states implemented during 2005/06 for schools in need of improvement. By illuminating key characteristics and differences among state systems, the intent is to stimulate a thoughtful analysis of what states can do and what issues they might address to move schools out of in need of improvement status.
4	La Frontera: Student Achievement In Texas Border and Nonborder Districts	September 2007	Southwest	This study provides policymakers with a data-driven profile of the education environment along the U.S.-Mexico border in Texas, an area known as La Frontera.
4	Levers for Change: Southeast Region State Initiatives To Improve High Schools	September 2007	Southeast	This descriptive report aims to stimulate discussion about high school reform among Southeast Region states. The report groups recent state activities in high school reform into six "levers for change." These levers for change include, but are not limited to, how states are working to align standards and assessments with expectations for post-secondary education and with twenty-first century skills and how states are revising their graduation requirements to include courses required for college and mandatory course sequences that make a stronger connection to work readiness. To encourage critical reflection, the report places the reform discussion in the context of an evidence-based decision-making process and provides sample research on reform activities.

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Across the REL Network				
4	Math Education Practices for Students with Disabilities and Other Struggling Learners: Case Studies of Six Schools in Two Northeast and Islands Region States	August 2008	Northeast & Islands	This report describes in-depth practices at six schools that are making targeted efforts to improve math education for students with disabilities and other struggling learners. It examines each school's practices for improving the math learning of all students as well as specific supports for students with disabilities and other struggling learners and identifies the challenges that schools face to serve students with diverse needs.
4	Parent Involvement Activities in School Improvement Plans in the Northwest Region	October 2008	Northwest	This report addresses the fact that although the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 spells out parent involvement requirements for schools in need of improvement, the majority (54 percent) of the 84 percent of Northwest Region school improvement plans reviewed failed to include such provisions. Many schools rely on communication as the primary way to involve parents-despite the wide range of parent involvement practices discussed in the literature.
4	Parent Involvement Strategies in Urban Middle and High Schools in the Northeast and Islands Region	April 2009	Northeast & Islands	This report summarizes efforts to develop and pilot test a protocol for collecting information about parent involvement policies, practices, and programs being implemented at the middle and high school levels. The protocol can be used to expand documentation of strategies selected, adapted, and sustained in future years.
4	Piloting a Searchable Database of Dropout Prevention Programs in Nine Low-Income Urban School Districts in the Northeast and Islands Region	March 2008	Northeast & Islands	Despite evidence that some dropout prevention programs have positive effects, whether districts in the region are using such evidence-based programs has not been documented. This report details a pilot project to generate and share knowledge by building a searchable database of dropout programs and policies.
4	Reducing Stereotype Threat in Classrooms: Review of Social-Psychological Intervention Studies to Improve African-American Students' Achievement	July 2009	Southeast	This literature review located and summarized findings from experimental studies on classroom-based social-psychological interventions aimed at reducing the experience of stereotype threat that might otherwise lead some African-American students to underperform on difficult academic tasks or tests. Experimental research on both inducing and reducing stereotype threat are described. This research can inform discussions of strategies to narrow the achievement gap, a critical goal for states, districts, and schools. The project identified and describes three experimental studies of social-psychological interventions to reduce stereotype threat and improve student achievement.

To view all REL Program research reports, visit <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/>.

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ARRA Assurance 4: Improving Low Performing Schools

#	Report	Date	REL	Description
Across the REL Network				
4	State Policies and Procedures and Selected Local Implementation Practices in Response to Intervention in the Six Southeast Region States	September 2008	Southeast	This report describes how six state education agencies and three local education agencies in the Southeast Region are adopting and implementing Response to Intervention-an education approach designed to provide effective, evidence-based interventions for struggling learners.
4	Subgroups and Adequate Yearly Progress in Mid-Atlantic Region Schools	September 2007	Mid-Atlantic	This report examines to what extent Mid-Atlantic Region schools are achieving adequate yearly progress targets for No Child Left Behind subgroups. It provides education leaders with easily accessible data on what standards Mid-Atlantic Region states set for adequate yearly progress, how major No Child Left Behind subgroups perform against these standards, and how subgroup performance influences schools' adequate yearly progress determinations.
4	Supplemental Educational Services and Implementation Challenges in the Northwest Region States	July 2007	Northwest	Participation in supplemental educational services in the Northwest Region is about one-third the national rate. Among the challenges to improving services for all eligible children are recruiting, monitoring, and evaluating service providers; communicating effectively at all levels, from parents to the state; and weak data systems, with data both difficult to access and often conflicting.
4	The Reenrollment of High School Dropouts in a Large, Urban School District	July 2008	West	This study follows a cohort of first-time 9th graders in one large urban school district from 2001/02 to 2005/06 and documents their dropout, reenrollment, and graduation rates. For the one-third of dropouts who reenrolled in the district over that period, it reports course credit accrual and graduation outcomes as well as students' reasons for dropping out and the challenges districts face with their reenrollment.
4	The Status of State-level Response to Intervention Policies and Procedures in the West Region States and Five Other States	August 2009	West	Response to intervention (RTI) can be both a system for providing early interventions to struggling students and a special education diagnostic tool for evaluating and identifying students with specific learning disabilities. Contributing to the very limited literature on state-level approaches, this report describes how nine states define and support RTI at the state level.
4	The Students with Disabilities Subgroup and Adequate Yearly Progress in Mid-Atlantic Region Schools	July 2007	Mid-Atlantic	The percentages of students with disabilities were similar for all five Mid-Atlantic jurisdictions, at about 14 percent of students, but the percentages of schools reporting for this subgroup varied from 15 percent for Pennsylvania to 96 percent for Maryland. In four states more schools missed their adequate yearly progress targets solely because of the performance of this subgroup than because of the performance of any other subgroup.

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ARRA Assurance 4: Improving Low Performing Schools

#	Report	Date	REL	Description
Across the REL Network				
4	Using Strategy Instruction to Help Struggling High Schoolers Understand What They Read	October 2007	Central	The evidence indicates that peer-assisted learning can have a substantively important positive effect on struggling high school students' reading comprehension. But reservations remain about attributing improved comprehension to peer-assisted learning because the students were not randomly assigned to the intervention in the one study that met evidence standards.

REL Program Research Reports Related to ARRA Assurances

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Additional Resources

Report	Date	REL	Description
Across the REL Network			
Access to Supplemental Educational Services in the Central Region States	July 2007	Central	At just 11 percent of eligible students, participation rates in supplemental educational services-available in schools that fail to make adequate progress for three years running-are low and may not improve until provision problems are resolved and programs demonstrate effectiveness. Answers to five research questions provide a status report.
Examining American Indian Perspectives in the Central Region on Parent Involvement in Children's Education	August 2008	Central	This study examines American Indian parents' perceptions of parent involvement in their children's education and factors that may encourage or discourage involvement.
Implementation of the Weighted Student Formula Policy in San Francisco: a Descriptive Study of an Equity-Driven, Student-Based Planning and Budgeting Policy	August 2008	West	This report describes the planning and implementation of San Francisco's weighted student formula policy, an equity-driven student-based planning and budgeting policy. It examines one district's policy goals, planning and implementation considerations, and how the policy interacted with other local, state, and federal policies.
Measuring Resilience and Youth Development: The Psychometric Properties of the Healthy Kids Survey	September 2007	West	This report summarizes findings from a study of the psychometric properties of the resilience and youth development module, a key component of the Healthy Kids Survey. The study aims to improve resilience assessment and research so that educators can shape the school environment to promote academic resilience.
Preparing to Serve English Language Learner Students: School Districts with Emerging English Language Learner Communities	June 2008	Appalachia	This report aims to help school districts deal with the challenges of newly enrolling or rapidly increasing English language learner 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 English language learner students.
Registering Students from Language Backgrounds Other Than English	August 2007	Appalachia	This report seeks to alert administrators, school staff, and database managers to variations in the naming systems of other cultures; to help these groups accommodate other cultures and identify students consistently in school databases; and to provide knowledge of other cultures' naming conventions and forms of address to assist in interacting with students and their family members.

REL Program Research Reports Related to ARRA Assurances

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Additional Resources

Report	Date	REL	Description
Across the REL Network			
Snapshots of Indiana's Full-Day Kindergarten Programs Before and After the State's Funding Increase for the Program	July 2009	Midwest	The Indiana General Assembly increased the state grant funds for full-day kindergarten from \$8.5 million for 2006/07 to \$33.5 million for 2007/08. Following the increase in funding, the Indiana Department of Education and the Indiana State Board of Education requested assistance from Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest to analyze Indiana administrative data so that the agencies could report to the legislature on changes in full-day kindergarten enrollment and funding. This technical brief describes Indiana's full-day kindergarten enrollment patterns before and after the legislation (in 2006/07 and 2007/08) both in the state at large and in individual school corporations (equivalent to school districts) for all kindergarten students and disaggregated by student and school characteristics.
West Virginia's Progress Toward Universal Prekindergarten	April 2009	Appalachia	The report examines rates of participation in West Virginia's universal, voluntary prekindergarten program from 2002/03 to 2006/07. It describes the share of seats provided by collaborative partners and public school systems and analyzes participation rates by demographic and socioeconomic subgroup and county characteristics.



Meet the REL in Your Region – REL Pacific

REL Pacific serves one state (Hawai'i), three territories ([American Samoa](#), the [Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands](#), and [Guam](#)), and three nations in free association with the United States—the Federated States of Micronesia ([Chuuk](#), [Kosrae](#), [Pohnpei](#), and [Yap](#)), the [Republic of the Marshall Islands](#), and the [Republic of Palau](#). These entities have a population of 1,680,000 people spread across 4.9 million square miles of the Pacific Ocean. In addition to economic and political diversity, the Pacific islands are characterized by a multitude of indigenous cultures and languages. The languages of instruction in the region's schools include more than a dozen Pacific languages, such as Chuukese, Marshallese, and Samoan. English is the common language of instruction in all jurisdictions, but is not the language spoken at home for most students outside of Hawai'i. Teachers' highest levels of education range from a high school diploma to a PhD.

The REL Pacific is a program of Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL), whose mission is *Building Capacity Through Education*. The focus of the work of REL Pacific is bringing evidence-based educational interventions to practitioners in the Pacific region.

Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) is the primary contractor for REL Pacific. PREL is an independent, nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation that serves the educational community in the U.S.-affiliated Pacific, the continental United States, and countries throughout the world. PREL bridges the gap between research, theory, and practice in education and works collaboratively with schools and school systems to provide services that range from curriculum development to assessment and evaluation. In addition to the main office in Honolulu, Hawaii, PREL maintains personnel at 11 service centers throughout the U.S.-affiliated Pacific. PREL service centers, which are established in partnership with local educational agencies in each of the entities PREL serves, assist in making PREL's work more timely, meaningful, and responsive to needs. In the Pacific region, with its long distances and wide diversity of cultures and languages, PREL service centers are a critical component in maximizing available resources and ensuring the appropriateness of service—what is provided and how it is provided—in order to obtain the greatest impact. PREL subcontracts with Berkeley Policy Associates (BPA), a California-based research and evaluation company. REL Pacific partners with all of the school systems in the U.S.-affiliated Pacific, as well as the institutions of higher education (IHEs).

For more information about REL Pacific, please visit <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific>.

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