

## Task 3 Cross-REL Webinar: Putting REL Research Into Action

Regional Educational  
Laboratory  
Central

*From the National Center for Education Evaluation at IES*

### Overview

**Date and Time:** October 28, 2021, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:45 pm MT

**Location:** Virtual

**Presenters:**

- Susan Burkhauser (REL Midwest) and Jonathan Margolin (REL Midwest)
- Mary Rauner (REL West)
- Kevin Smith (REL Southeast)
- Daniel Brenner (WestEd) and Elizabeth Blesson (REL Mid-Atlantic)
- Ben Cronkright (REL Pacific) and Chief Lucia Tabelual (Palau Ministry of Education)
- Kerry Friedman (REL Appalachia)
- Hella Bel Hadj Amor (REL Northwest)
- Dominique Bradley (REL Midwest) and Susan Burkhauser (REL Midwest)
- Josh Stewart and Jeanette Joyce (REL Central)

**REL Central Presenters and Facilitators:**

- David Yanoski
- Steven Tedeschi

### Description

This event will highlight the research and support that RELs offer their rural partners and will focus on action steps that practitioners can take based on the work. 8 RELs will present on research and tools developed over the last 5 years and participate in a panel discussion focused on the practical takeaways from each of these projects.

**Goals:**

1. To share rural research and tools developed by Regional Education Laboratories over the last five years.
2. To discuss the practical takeaways and applications of the rural research and tools developed by the RELs.

## Agenda

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### **2:00 p.m.–2:05 p.m. Introduction to the Webinar**

**Facilitator:** David Yanoski

**Audience activity:** None

**Materials (including handouts or datasets):** None

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Content:**

1. Yanoski will explain the webinar platform features, including how to use the chat box for questions (2 min).
2. Yanoski will review the format of the webinar (2 min).

### **2:05 p.m.–2:40 p.m. Session 1: Career Readiness (Four Presentations)**

**Facilitator:** David Yanoski

**Time:** 35 minutes. Each presenter will have 5 minutes to present, followed by a 15-minute guided discussion about the use of the information.

#### **Presentation 1: Alternative Career Readiness Measures and Rural Districts in Texas**

**Presenters:** Susan Burkhauser (REL Midwest) and Jonathan Margolin (REL Midwest)

**Content (and related sources) to be presented:** A comprehensive reform of the state's school finance system, Texas House Bill 3, passed in 2019. The bill established a college, career, and military readiness outcomes bonus, which provides extra funding to Texas districts for each annual graduate demonstrating college, career, or military readiness under the state accountability system. High school graduates demonstrate career readiness by earning an industry-based certification (or a Level I or Level II certificate), and the expected pathway to earning these credentials is through career and technical education (CTE) programs. However, local capacity and funding issues in small or rural districts can limit actions, such as teacher recruitment, creating obstacles to implementing CTE programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials. The provisions of House Bill 3 included a requirement that the Texas Education Agency (TEA) conduct a study to determine whether graduates from small districts and rural districts can demonstrate career readiness through alternative career readiness options. TEA partnered with REL Southwest to conduct the study *Alternative Career Readiness Measures and Rural Districts in Texas*. The Texas Commissioner of Education Mike Morath will use the results of the study to inform the 87th Texas Legislative Session regarding alternative career readiness options that are more accessible to small or rural districts and are associated with college and career outcomes.

**Reference:**

Burkhauser, S., Mellor, L., Garland, M., & Osman, D. (2021). *Alternative career readiness measures for small and rural districts in Texas* (REL 2021–066). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest.  
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?projectID=6710>

**Presentation 2: Using Data From Rural California Middle-Skill Supply and Demand Study**

**Presenter:** Mary Rauner (REL West)

**Content (and related sources) to be presented:** Rural areas of California often lack the data needed to enable stakeholders to align middle-skill workforce supply and occupational demand by adjusting local education programming to produce graduates with the qualifications for available jobs. In this project, REL West calculated descriptive statistics on measures of middle-skill workforce supply and projected occupational demand in four rural regions of the state. The study found that, in each of the regions, the average annual number of jobs in middle-skill occupations far exceeded the number of middle-skill credentials that postsecondary institutions awarded—even in the 10 most in-demand middle-skill occupations. The results were shared with stakeholders from each of the regions who are engaged or interested in equalizing the supply and demand of career pathways programs. Based on the data, the participants identified and shared strategies for adjusting career pathways programs that will ultimately improve the alignment between education supply and workforce demand.

**Reference:**

Rauner, M., Goss, M., Huang, M., Meyer, L., & Torre Gibney, T. (2020). *Supply and demand for middle-skill occupations in rural California in 2018–20* (REL 2021–040). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory West.  
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?projectID=4598>

**Presentation 3: Self-Study Guide for Career Readiness in Secondary Schools**

**Presenter:** Kevin Smith (REL Southeast)

**Content (and related sources) to be presented:** The Florida Career Readiness Research Alliance began as a way to focus on the issue of limited career counseling for students in rural schools. Training for educators in three rural consortia in Florida was developed based on a review of the literature in this area. Infographics were created to support these trainings, as was a self-study guide tool to help educators in states, districts, and schools consider how best to focus on areas important for career readiness in secondary schools.

**Reference:**

Smith, K. G., Lee, L., Carr, M., Weatherill, A., & Lancashire, H. (2020). *Self-study guide for career readiness in secondary schools* (REL 2020–035). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast.  
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?projectID=6694>

**Presentation 4: Aligning Educational Offerings With Entry-Level Skills for STEM Jobs**

**Presenters:** Daniel Brenner (WestEd) and Elizabeth Blesson (REL Mid-Atlantic)

**Content (and related sources) to be presented:** This coaching project builds on previous REL work to provide teachers and administrators with a rubric for conducting an audit of high school science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) courses and extracurricular activities to identify what employer-desired, entry-level skills schools are explicitly teaching and where gaps exist. In this project, the REL is working with school districts in Western Pennsylvania to extend the use of the audit tools with high school teachers, students, and department and school administrators.

**Reference:**

REL Mid-Atlantic. (n.d.). *Aligning educational offerings with entry-level skills for STEM jobs* [Unpublished manuscript].  
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midatlantic/app/partnerships/ReadinessForCareerEntry>

**Group Discussion**

**Facilitator:** David Yanoski

**Content:** Yanoski will facilitate a group discussion based on the following questions as well as questions from the audience:

- How can stakeholders use your work? What is the major takeaway you want stakeholders to have?
- What are the major issues in career readiness? How can research help support stakeholders in dealing with these?
- Where are these materials available?

**2:40 p.m.–3:05 p.m. Session 2: Improving Instruction (Two Presentations)**

**Facilitator:** David Yanoski

**Time:** 25 minutes. Each presenter will have 5 minutes to present, followed by a 15-minute guided discussion about the use of the information.

## **Presentation 1: The Palau Partnership for the Improvement of Teaching**

**Presenters:** Ben Cronkright (REL Pacific) and Chief Lucia Tabelual (Palau Ministry of Education)

**Content (and related sources) to be presented:** A collaborative effort of REL Pacific and educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders in Palau is focused on designing better system supports for teacher preparation, induction, retention, and instruction. As part of this work, the Palau Partnership has developed the Palau Professional Learning Framework to provide Palau leaders, education specialists, and principals with a framework and practical guidance on how to design, implement, and evaluate effective and sustainable professional learning experiences for preservice and in-service teachers in support of the belief that “A rengalek er a skuul a mo ungil chad er a Belau me a beluulechad (our students will be successful in the Palauan society and the world).” The framework is divided into six sections, each of which outlines an identified professional/leadership standard to guide and inform the design, delivery, and evaluation of professional learning activities throughout Palau’s education systems. REL Pacific is also currently working with the Palau Ministry of Education to develop its capacity to design an effective, context-specific teacher mentoring and induction program providing comprehensive, systemwide supports and activities to foster and promote teacher growth and development through the application of appropriate research and data analysis methods.

### **References:**

Center on Great Teachers and Leaders. (2020). *Evidence-based strategy toolkits: Mentoring & induction toolkit 2.0*. <https://gtlcenter.org/technical-assistance/toolkits/mi-toolkit>

Learning Forward. (n.d.) *Standards for professional learning*.  
<https://learningforward.org/standards/>

Shakman, K., Wogan, D., Rodriguez, S., Boyce, J., & Shaver, D. (2020). *Continuous improvement in education: A toolkit for schools and districts* (REL 2021–014). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast & Islands. <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?projectID=4591>

## **Presentation 2: Community Math Night Facilitators’ Toolkit**

**Presenter:** Kerry Friedman (REL Appalachia)

**Content (and related sources) to be presented:** At Community Math Nights (CMNs), educators, children, and family members come together to learn and talk about math. These events can help family members and other caring adults participate in their child's learning, raise expectations for math achievement, and promote their child's math success. To support educators in planning and hosting CMNs, the *Community Math Night Facilitators’ Toolkit* provides resources for users to learn key research underpinning the design of CMNs and reflect on how

the research can be applied to their practice; plan a CMN with the help of templates, tools, checklists, and other practical resources; and lead a successful CMN that includes opportunities for community-building, discussion of key research on the importance of math, positive math attitudes, and growth mindset, and engagement with grade-differentiated math station activities that build confidence and rapport between educators, students, and families. REL Appalachia originally designed CMNs in 2018 with rural schools in West Virginia. The forthcoming toolkit includes planning considerations that can help rural schools to identify and build the capacity and resources needed to host a successful CMN. Kerry Friedman, lead for the REL Appalachia CMNs partnership, will present the toolkit.

### **Reference:**

Friedman, K., Kassner, L., Araoz, C., & Dempsey, K. (in press). *Community Math Night facilitators' toolkit*. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Appalachia.

### **Group Discussion**

**Facilitator:** David Yanoski

**Content:** Yanoski will facilitate a group discussion based on the following questions as well as questions from the audience:

- How can stakeholders use your work? What is the major takeaway you want stakeholders to have?
- How can research help support stakeholders in improving instruction?
- Where are these materials available?

### **3:05 p.m.–3:35 p.m. Session # 3: Program Evaluation (2 presentations)**

**Facilitator:** David Yanoski

**Time:** 25 minutes—each presenter will have 5 minutes to present back-to-back, followed by a 15-minute guided discussion about the use of the information.

Is It Working? Introduction to Program Evaluation and Data Collection in Rural Alaska

**Presenters:** Hella Bel Hadj Amor (REL Northwest)

**Content (and related sources) to be presented:** A group of stakeholders were wondering how to use data to determine whether a program was doing well and how it could improve. REL Northwest provided coaching on logic modeling to fully understand the program, ensure the stakeholders were on the same page about what the program was and what it was meant to accomplish and how, and support the design of evaluation questions. We then provided support on survey design and analysis to answer their top-priority question.

We also developed slide decks and handouts that the stakeholders have informed us they continue to use. The materials could be used by other practitioners as well.

**References:** Bel Haj Amor, H. (2020). *How REL coaching helped improve data collection at a CTE program in Alaska*. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/blog/coaching-helped-data-collection.asp>

Toolkit for Assessing Learning Changes After Spring 2020 COVID-19 School Closures

**Presenters:** Dominique Bradley (REL Midwest) and Susan Burkhauser (REL Midwest)

**Content (and related sources) to be presented:** REL Midwest, in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Education, developed a free toolkit to help districts assess learning changes across grades, subject areas, and student groups; identify where there may be gaps in learning; and use that information to plan and adjust student services and instruction. The toolkit was designed for district teams with a range of analytical experience and capacity, including districts with limited access to student testing data. Consisting of five modules, the toolkit walks districts through the steps needed for data collection, analysis, and planning. Additional resources include guidelines for structured team discussions, workbooks to plan and record activities, and a decision tree to aid districts in deciding next steps as they progress through the modules. REL Midwest provided trainings for all of Ohio's Regional Data Leads (RDL). These RDLs support districts of all sizes in processing and assessing student achievement data. The toolkit is designed to ensure analyses are accessible to districts with limited capacity to conduct complex analyses, making it an ideal tool for more rural districts with fewer resources.

**References:** Bradley, D., Burkhauser, S., & Goldston, C. (2020). *A toolkit for assessing learning changes after spring 2020 COVID-19 school closures*. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest. <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/training-and-coaching/covid-19-learning-changes-toolkit.aspx>

The Program Evaluation Tool Kit

**Presenters:** Josh Stewart and Jeanette Joyce (REL Central)

**Content (and related sources) to be presented:** Program evaluation is important for assessing the implementation and outcomes of local, state, and federal programs. The *Program Evaluation Tool Kit* provides resources and tools to help users contribute to evaluations of their own programs. The toolkit comprises a series of eight modules that begin at the planning stages of an evaluation and progress to the presentation of findings. Each module covers a critical step in the evaluation process. The toolkit website includes a

screencast slide deck that provides an overview of each stage in the evaluation process. It also includes a glossary of terms, handouts, worksheets, and tools to help you conduct your own evaluation. Resources in the toolkit will help you create a logic model, develop evaluation questions, identify data sources, develop data collection instruments, conduct basic analyses, and disseminate findings.

**References:**

Stewart, J., Joyce, J., Haines, M., Yanoski, D., Gagnon, D., Luke, K., Rhoads, C., & Germeroth, C. (20XX). *Program evaluation tool kit: Quick start guide* (REL 20XX–XXX). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Central.  
<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>

Group Discussion

**Facilitator:** David Yanoski

**Content:** Yanoski will facilitate a group discussion based on the following questions and questions from the audience

- How can stakeholders use your work? What is the major takeaway you want stakeholders to have?
- How can program evaluation be used to support schools and districts?
- Where are these materials available?

**3:35 p.m.–3:45 p.m. Questions and Closing**

**Facilitator:** David Yanoski

**Audience activities:** Q & A with all presenters

**Materials (including handouts or datasets):** None

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Content:**

1. Yanoski will facilitate a whole-group Q & A session (5 min).
2. Yanoski will explain how participants can access resources and a recording of the webinar and will ask participants to complete a feedback survey (5 min).