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## MESSAGE FROM DIRECTOR

Welcome to the start of a new school year. This time of year provides an opportunity to start fresh and explore new ways to learn and grow. REL Appalachia (REL AP) is here as your partner to bridge education research and education practice in areas that are important to your school community.

The REL AP team regularly hosts and presents at events across the region. Visit our website at <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/appalachia/index.asp> to learn about upcoming events, the various supports that REL AP offers, and updates on our collaborative partnerships. If you have a research-based education question, submit it to [Ask A REL](#) and we will get back to you with references, referrals, and brief responses in the form of citations. Follow us on [Twitter](#) or contact us directly at [relappalachia@sri.com](mailto:relappalachia@sri.com) to receive real time updates from the region.



We look forward to engaging with you this school year!

Deborah Jonas, PhD  
Director, REL Appalachia

**COMING SOON...**  
from REL Appalachia

### Algebra for All: Focus on Visual Representations (national webinar)

[Register](#) for the REL AP [Student Success in Mathematics partnership](#) national webinar on **October 17** at 3:30 p.m. ET

for upper elementary and middle school mathematics educators and leaders. The webinar presenters will share research-based strategies that support all learners in preparing for algebra I, focusing on the use of visual representations to support mathematics content learning for English learner students and students who are struggling. Webinar presenters will highlight research and outline recommendations from Institute of Education Sciences



practice guides about teaching students to use visual representations, such as how to use a visual representation to understand the algebraic relationships in a task, among other strategies.

### Paving the Way to Postsecondary Education (Cedar Bluff, Virginia)



[Register](#) for the REL AP [Improving Postsecondary Transitions](#) partnership's first interactive event in the *Paving the Way* series in Virginia this year on *Nonacademic Supports for Successful Student Transitions*. The event will take place on **October 22** at Southwest Virginia Community College. REL AP staff will share evidence-based resources and build awareness of the supports that educators and other professionals can provide students in the region as they transition from high school. Learn more about this *Paving the Way* event and [register](#) to attend.

### Building Bridges to College and Career (Manchester, Kentucky)



Are you a rural educator interested in learning more about evidence-based practices supporting student transitions to postsecondary education and training programs? [Join us](#) at the first of a three-part series, *Building Bridges to College and Career: Family Engagement for Successful Student Transition* workshop on **November 7** at the Manchester Campus of Eastern Kentucky University. This event is designed to enhance attendees identification and understanding of evidence-based parent and family engagement strategies that support successful postsecondary transition and persistence in the eastern Kentucky region and similar communities. Learn more about the workshop and [register](#) to attend.

## PROJECT UPDATES

### Learn About Our Work and Partnership Events

REL Appalachia works in partnership with school districts, state departments of education, and other education stakeholders in the region to develop high-quality research and to use and disseminate the research findings to improve student outcomes. These partnerships combine rigorous research with responsive training, coaching, and technical support and practitioner-focused information sharing to ensure that evidence informs practice in a timely manner to benefit students.

### Community Opioid Blog Post



The states that REL AP serves (Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia) are among the most severely impacted areas of the country for opioid addiction and its devastating consequences. The pervasiveness of the epidemic has put additional demands on institutions that support children and families, including schools. REL AP staff can share tools and resources, disseminate evidence-based promising practices, and assess interventions to help educators and other stakeholders navigate the changing needs of students and families. Read the [blog](#) *Community Opioid Abuse and Student Trauma: New Challenges for Educators* to find relevant resources and learn more about how REL AP can help. Want information on evidence-based practices? Contact [Ask A REL](#) with your questions!

### Innovation Configuration Maps: A valuable journey and destination

Innovation Configuration (IC) Maps are a valuable tool for understanding and measuring implementation of a curriculum, intervention, or evidence-based practice and categorizing implementation on a spectrum from *ideal* to *less than ideal*. The development and use of an IC Map can be beneficial for educators in any content area or region. REL AP staff and middle school math teachers in Jackson County, Kentucky learned that building an IC Map is about both the journey *and* the destination. Teachers found that the process of developing an IC Map helped them to identify ways to improve their practice, even before they completed the map. They saw the IC Map development process as a valuable form of professional development that offered opportunities for them to collaborate, learn more about research-based practices, and reflect on their own practices. Check out our [blog](#) on IC Maps to learn more about the experience of Jackson County teachers and for tips on how to embark on this journey in your district.



Jackson County middle school

## STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

Meet a Member of the REL AP Team

### Dr. Jaunelle Pratt-Williams, Training Facilitator, Postsecondary Transitions Partnership

Jaunelle Pratt-Williams has more than 15 years of education experience, both as a teacher and a researcher. Her research and technical support focus on K-12 education and postsecondary transitions with an emphasis on students' non-academic needs such as social and emotional learning and wrap-around services. Her experiences in the K-12 system as a teacher and as a first-generation college student grounds Pratt-Williams' research activities. An experienced mixed-methods researcher, Pratt-Williams uses quantitative and qualitative research methods to support the needs and goals of practitioners and education agencies including providing technical assistance to education leaders interested in cost analysis studies. You can see Jaunelle's expertise in action at the upcoming workshop, [Nonacademic Supports for Successful Student Transitions](#), October 22 in Cedar Bluff, Virginia.



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Independent, Unbiased Research Support for  
Your State's Education Priorities



[ASK A REL](#)

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