

Video Transcript

Discover the REL Central Governing Board

TRUDY CHERASARO: So REL Central is one of 10 Regional Educational Laboratories and our job is to partner with educators in our region to help them to think about how to use evidence and data and to inform their initiatives and inform their practice. It's our job to think about what their issues are and then fit the REL work into supporting them.

DAVID YANOSKI: Our approach to developing partnerships is a very collaborative approach. Working together to develop a research agenda that meets the needs, the individual, specific needs of those partners. In doing so, it changes that paradigm of research from research being done to somebody to research being done with somebody.

CORY EPLER: What the REL has allowed us to do is it provides support that internally we don't have, thinking about capacity issues across most states and most education agencies but also providing the focused attention and expertise relative to what's most in need in our state.

TRUDY CHERASARO: What we do really well is that we have really strong relationships and partnerships with the educators in our region.

LAURIE MATZKE: Those partnerships mean everything, and so building those relationships and creating those partnerships to help us build capacity, and help us do the things that we can't do on our own. That is just instrumental for North Dakota.

DAN JORGENSEN: All the professional development, all the technical support, these are things that we wouldn't necessarily have available to us without the REL. It's very important for us to have an external sounding board on these things, an external provider of services, an understanding concerning our approaches. And quite simply, it's a pulling together of expertise that doesn't exist out there in any other fashion that I'm aware of.

DAVID YANOSKI: I think one of the things that REL Central does really, really well is to build capacity within the partnership. And what I mean by that is that we have a singular focus in making sure that when we work with partnerships members on a project that they have a

greater understanding and ability to use research to answer their own questions than they did before they started.

LAURIE MATZKE: We're a small state. We have a very small staff. And so having the REL Central come in like they are with our early childhood initiative and they're building the capacity of their KFA committee and so that is just integral to helping us succeed and meet our goals in our state.

DAVID YANOSKI: Our job... one of our fundamental jobs is to leave the partnership with more knowledge and skill than they had before they started.

CORY EPLER: One of things that I wrestle with a lot in my role is thinking about how we provide supports to schools, and REL Central has really allowed us to increase our capacity around strategies and resources that ultimately help school improvement. And as we think about the bigger picture and helping students and helping our schools and our communities, REL Central has played a role in helping me build capacity, to be able to do some of the work that we might not be able to do.

DAN JORGENSEN: I learn a lot about what's going on in neighboring states. It gives me a better context and understanding how we make our decisions—how we can help schools and districts better make theirs.

WAYNE STEWART: It has just been fabulous for me and my school district to be able to find out what's going on in the country, not just Missouri, but, you know, in our whole seven state region.

LAURIE MATZKE: The technical assistance, the data analysis, the support with research, the capacity building is huge.

CORY EPLER: The REL has allowed us to work much bigger than what we would have been able to do alone.

DICKY SHANOR: To have a REL with the diverse expertise waiting there for free for us to leverage is invaluable.

BRIAN SMITH: We're all here for the kids, and we're all wanting that research, data-driven information that will make our school successful.

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