

# NEWS

Delaware • District of Columbia • Maryland  
New Jersey • Pennsylvania

# NEWSLETTER

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## Latest News from the Director



Dear Colleagues:

As the REL Mid-Atlantic at Mathematica Policy Research moves into its second year, I'm excited to share news with our stakeholders in Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania on our progress and activities to date.

After relaunching the REL Mid-Atlantic in April and listening to stakeholders discuss needs in the region, we focused on building partnerships with leaders in state education agencies; in rural, suburban, and urban schools and districts; and in regional nonprofits. Stakeholders from all of these organizations are active partners in our seven research alliances—on accountability, educator training and support, school improvement, personalized learning, career readiness, early childhood, and family engagement—and are working with REL staff on applied research, training, coaching, and technical support to address high-priority topics. Our Governing Board steers the ship, providing strategic guidance and input on project plans.

By working together on applied research, training, coaching, and technical support, we are creating actionable knowledge to tackle the region's pressing challenges—and developing stakeholders' capacity to interpret, conduct, and use research to support data-driven decision making. We are also disseminating knowledge from our own work and the larger education field to educators around the region. You can read more about these activities in the rest of the newsletter.

An important part of our work involves continually listening to needs and gathering input from many sources around the Mid-Atlantic region. Let us hear from you about your work and ways the REL might be able to help.

**Brian Gill, Ph.D.**

Director, REL Mid-Atlantic

Senior Fellow, Mathematica Policy Research

## Fast Forward to Our New Video Series!



We've launched the first video in a series about the REL Mid-Atlantic and its work. *The REL Mid-Atlantic: Building Capacity to Use Research in Decision Making* features staff and Governing Board members discussing our main activities and our mission to collaborate with stakeholders on using evidence to address their pressing education problems. The video focuses on how the REL is guided by collaborative partnerships that are committed to growing capacity

and knowledge, and grounded in rigorous research. Stay tuned for upcoming videos on work in progress with the research alliances.

## Updates from the Alliances



- **Personalized learning.** Many school districts are interested in implementing blended learning but do not have evidence on its effects or information on how to implement it. We developed *an infographic* about the research on blended learning, focusing on its impact on student achievement and best practices for successfully implementing it.

- **Readiness for career entry and success.** The career readiness alliance sponsored a workshop on the skills that students need for long-term career success, particularly in the rapidly growing energy and health care sectors in western Pennsylvania. Participants included school district teams and local higher education staff; the alliance expects industry representatives to participate in follow-up activities. [View a recording of the workshop.](#)

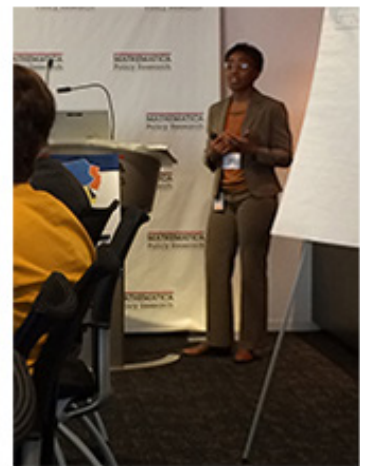
- **School support and improvement.** The team is developing a district-based needs-assessment for supporting school turnaround in Delaware.
- **Training and supporting excellent educators.** The School District of Philadelphia began its teacher residency program in 2016–2017 to attract candidates from diverse backgrounds, improve teacher retention, and improve outcomes for students. We developed *a fact sheet* to summarize characteristics of existing teacher residency programs and related research. We are also developing an intake form for the district to use to learn more about characteristics of newly hired teachers and training programs to aid in recruiting and retaining new teachers.
- **Accountability.** Like other states across the country, Maryland is including additional measures of school performance, including a measure of school climate, in its ESSA plan. The REL team is working with the Maryland State Department of Education to select and refine climate surveys for school staff and students.

[Read more](#) about how our research alliances are collaborating with stakeholders to address problems of practice in the areas mentioned above.

## What's New? What's Next?

### New Year, New Ideas: Watch for the REL Mid-Atlantic Blog

Later this month we'll be launching RELevant, a blog featuring evidence-based viewpoints and findings from REL staff, Governing Board members, alliance members, and other stakeholders and influencers. Bloggers will deliver relevant, accessible, and timely information and perspectives that help decision makers understand the best ways to use the REL's work in their programs. Have ideas? Send them to us [here](#).



### Second Meeting of the Governing Board Moves Priorities Forward

The Governing Board met in Washington, DC, in November to continue its work on strategic directions for the REL Mid-Atlantic. The board heard more from the research alliances on their progress and discussed ways to deepen outreach and dissemination to ensure the knowledge generated reaches educators and policymakers across the region.

## Connect with Us on Social Media

Keep up with our latest news,  
research, and events!



Follow  
**@RELMidAtlantic**  
on Twitter!



Are you following @RELMidAtlantic on Twitter? Every week we post links to new work from our researchers and others, plus a wide range of resources for educators.

REL Mid-Atlantic on Twitter is also the place to go for information about upcoming REL Mid-Atlantic events—and to see the photos, materials, and videos from our events and meetings.

We're using social media to both disseminate our work and connect in real time with a wide world of education news.

Thanks for following @RELMidAtlantic. See you on Twitter!



Interested in **joining us** or **learning more**? **Contact us.**

For more information, please contact us at [RELMidAtlantic@mathematica-mpr.com](mailto:RELMidAtlantic@mathematica-mpr.com) or visit our website at <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midatlantic/>.



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