



# NEWS

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## NEWSLETTER

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### Latest News from the Director

Much of the REL's analytic work for state and local stakeholders involves examining and measuring not only student and teacher outcomes but also the important resources and processes that contribute to these outcomes. Understanding how schools, programs, and educators develop students' knowledge and skills is critical for diagnosing challenges and promoting continuous improvement. In short, careful measurement is a vital component of informing efforts to improve outcomes for students. This month, our newsletter highlights several of the REL's measurement projects, including a new report describing the development and results of the nation's first statewide measure of each elementary school's contribution to student growth in kindergarten to grade 3; a blog post on our work to help a state agency monitor the progress of its efforts to turn around low-performing schools; and another blog post on our partnership to help a district refine its measures of school leaders' contributions to student achievement. These are just a few of the ways in which we partner with mid-Atlantic educators and policymakers to measure the things that matter for improving teaching and learning.



Brian Gill

REL Mid-Atlantic Director

## Highlights

### Building Blocks: How One State Is Considering How to Measure Schools' Contributions to Early Learning

Children's experiences in the early grades lay an important foundation for their future academic success. Yet not a single state systematically measures how well its schools support students' academic growth from kindergarten to grade 3. This information can be key to making prudent resource investments and supporting sound policies and practices.

To learn more about how well its schools promote learning growth in the first four grades, the Maryland State Department of Education partnered with REL Mid-Atlantic to explore the feasibility of constructing a [school-level growth measure of kindergarten to grade 3](#) for the state's accountability system. This report explores the new measure in detail, noting how states can implement similar measures to help identify and support their schools in need of improvement. Stay tuned for a blog and related resources, including a fact sheet, soon.



## New Videos!

### Hear how REL Mid-Atlantic partners with schools and districts



**Training and support for new teachers.** In this [short video](#), Tamara Durant, an [alliance](#) member and teacher growth and evaluation coordinator with Pittsburgh Public Schools, discusses how the REL has helped her in her work supporting observers of teachers. As a centrally located administrator, she focuses on supporting teachers in implementing best practices at the classroom level.



**Using evidence in decisions.** In this [short video](#), [Sharif El-Mekki](#)—Governing Board member, former Philadelphia principal, and CEO of the Center for Black Educator Development—discusses the REL's importance in providing educators and school administrators with evidence-based findings to prepare students for success.

## Using Data to Keep School Improvement on Track: Focus on Comprehensive Support and Improvement

Research on chronically low-performing schools suggests that monitoring the implementation and progress of these schools' improvement efforts can help them use limited resources more effectively. This [blog post](#) discusses how we are co-developing a resource, in collaboration with the Office of Leadership Development and School Improvement at the Maryland State Department of Education, to track services to and engagement with schools that require comprehensive support and improvement.

### Real-Time Feedback Makes an IMPACT

Principals and assistant principals play a key role in improving students' outcomes, but finding the right measures to assess leaders' effectiveness is difficult. School leaders influence students in complex and indirect ways, making it difficult to measure their performance. This [blog post](#) provides an example of how we engage with our partners to provide timely evidence that informs the refinement of school leader performance measures with the ultimate aim of promoting student achievement.



## In Case You Missed It

### Go-Learn-Grow: A New Toolkit for Improving Attendance in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten

Chronic absenteeism is particularly high in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten compared with elementary and middle school. For a young child to succeed and develop a strong foundation for learning, he or she must attend school regularly. REL Mid-Atlantic has partnered with the New Jersey Department of Education to support its Go-Learn-Grow initiative, which seeks to improve the attendance of New Jersey's youngest learners. This [previously recorded webinar](#) explores the Go-Learn-Grow initiative and highlights the related user-friendly [toolkit](#) with resources for school districts, schools, and early childhood providers.

### New and Improved Search Functions Are Here!

You asked, and we answered! With the latest improvements to our website's search functions, you can now filter by topic on our [blog](#) and [infographic and fact sheet](#) pages for faster, more useful results. Give it a try, and [let us know](#) what you think.

## We're Social!

Are you following us on Twitter? [@RELMidAtlantic](#) is where you can plug into not only our work but also news from our nine REL partners across the country and the latest research from the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. We built our Twitter feed to be helpful, informative, and fun to scroll through. In partnership with our alliances throughout the REL Mid-Atlantic states, we use it every day to bring you the news and information most relevant to educators in our region. That includes videos, blogs, event coverage, and a wide range of expert (and user-friendly) advice. Thanks for following us [@RELMidAtlantic](#)!



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

Please reach out anytime to [RELmidatlantic@mathematica-mpr.com](mailto:RELmidatlantic@mathematica-mpr.com) to share your ideas about important issues the REL Mid-Atlantic could address; request free training, coaching, or technical support; or ask questions about how we can help you in your work.



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