

# NEWS

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## NEWSLETTER

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### Latest News from the Director



It has been a long and challenging winter, but with spring here and vaccine distribution under way, there is hope that more students and teachers can be back in school buildings—and that anxiety levels can be lower among those returning as well as those who have managed to keep their buildings open during the winter. I won't suggest we'll all be returning to "normal," because schooling will surely have changed permanently in some ways. Some of those changes should be for the better, as educators find ways to integrate some of the tools and approaches that the pandemic forced them to adopt to promote learning remotely. At REL Mid-Atlantic, we've continued to look for ways to support your work with research and data, offering insights from teachers and principals, suggestions for how districts can use data to promote transparency, a video with strategies for learning at home, and a webinar on keeping students engaged while they are learning remotely. I hope you find some of the resources below useful as you support student learning in school or at home.

Brian Gill  
Director, REL Mid-Atlantic

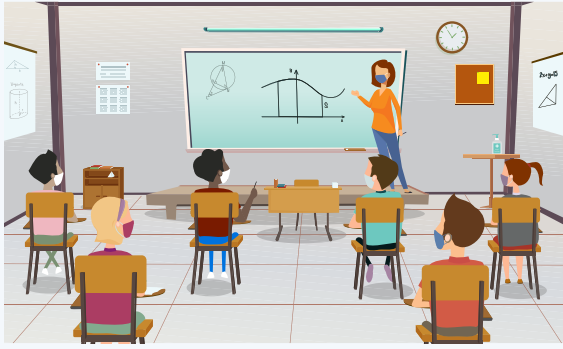
### Highlights

#### How School Districts Can Leverage Data in These Uncertain Times

[This blog post](#) offers school leaders ideas for using new types of data to promote better outcomes and support students during the pandemic. It builds on a [spring 2020 post](#) about data transparency to promote accountability.



## RElevant Blog Posts



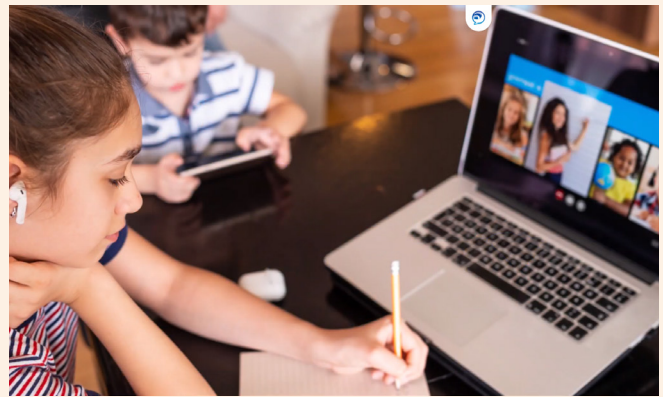
### [Voices from the Field on School Reopenings: Teacher Stressors and Needed Supports](#)

Figuring out how to deal with COVID-19, working from home, holding virtual classes, and collaborating in the pandemic environment have put a strain not only on students and families but also on teachers. Educators on our Governing Board [offer their thoughts](#) for coping during the pandemic.

## What's New, What's Next

### [Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic at Home: A Video with Tips for Building a Foundation to Move Forward](#)

In response to COVID-19, REL Mid-Atlantic has collaborated with other labs across the country to put together [evidence-based resources](#) about teaching and learning in a remote environment. [A new video](#) draws on these resources to provide tips to help families and caregivers build young children's basic skills at home. View the recommendations for strengthening reading, writing, and arithmetic, especially in the early years.



### [Addressing the Challenge of Keeping Kids Engaged During the Pandemic](#)



The spread of COVID-19 has caused schools and districts across the country to reconsider how to meet the needs of their students and teachers in a remote or hybrid environment. Like many state departments of education across the country, the New Jersey Department of Education wants to better understand how to offer high quality instruction while keeping students engaged. Listen to this [free webinar](#) recording on the work we conducted to better understand challenges and opportunities with promoting student engagement in these learning environments.

## Out and About

School climate indices can help state and local education agencies compare and identify schools that need targeted assistance. At the Pennsylvania Data Summit, REL Mid-Atlantic researchers Lauren Amos and Yange Xue, along with Pennsylvania Department of Education staff, discussed how school climate indices can help agencies answer questions about school improvement and supports that schools need.

REL Mid-Atlantic Director Brian Gill discussed evidence on COVID-19 transmission in schools at a SREE virtual convening on March 1. Researchers have been working hard to produce evidence to inform the decisions that schools will have to consider for at least the next several months, even as vaccines are rolled out. This webinar featured a panel of researchers who have contributed to the evidence from various perspectives. Collectively, their findings can help educators and policymakers make better-informed decisions about school operations as the pandemic continues.



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 that REL Mid-Atlantic could address, request free technical support, or ask questions about how we can help you in your work.



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