



NEWS

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NEWSLETTER

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Latest News from the Director



REL Mid-Atlantic Director Brian Gill. Photo by Rich Clement.

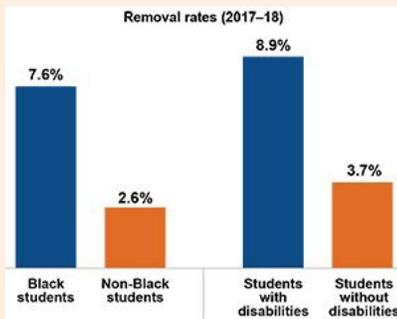
We're excited to have released findings from two applied research studies this fall. One examines disparities in student discipline in Maryland and the other describes how Philadelphia can use kindergarten entry assessments to predict future rates of 3rd-grade reading proficiency. Each represents the culmination of a partnership with a regional stakeholder to conduct extensive, actionable analytic work and technical support using that partner's data. We work with states, districts,

and other education stakeholders on these studies to produce findings that stakeholders can use to inform improvements in policy or practice. For example, Maryland now has better information about which schools have discipline disparities to guide its plans for reducing these disparities. Philadelphia is better positioned to assess whether cohorts of incoming kindergartners are on track for eventual proficiency in reading.

We think these reports will be of interest well beyond their local stakeholders, because they focus on discipline disproportionalities, and kindergarten readiness--matters of interest across the country. Stay tuned for the release of more reports in the coming months, on topics ranging from handling teacher retention and attrition to identifying students at risk of near-term academic problems.

Highlights: Focus on Discipline Disparities, Absenteeism in the Early Grades

Across the nation, Black students and students with disabilities are disproportionately subjected to [disciplinary practices](#) that remove them from the classroom and compromise opportunities to learn. At REL Mid-Atlantic, we're working with Maryland state education agencies to support efforts to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, discipline disparities.



Here's a snapshot of our related work.

REPORT, BLOG, AND INFOGRAPHIC: [Understanding Discipline Disparities in Maryland](#)

Maryland has prioritized looking at trends in discipline disparities to inform ways to improve discipline policies. A new study by REL Mid-Atlantic found Black students and students with disabilities in Maryland are removed from school at more than twice the rates of their peers. Even when they commit the same infraction, in the same

school, Black students and students with disabilities are more likely to be removed. This [infographic](#) highlights characteristics of Maryland schools with discipline disparities, as well as some of the ways REL Mid-Atlantic is helping to inform the state plans to reliably measure and improve their disciplinary policies. Read the related [report](#) and [blog post](#).

[Tools for Improving Attendance in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten](#)

Chronic absenteeism is particularly high in the early grades 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. We partnered with the New



Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) to support their initiative *Go-Learn-Grow: Improving the School Attendance of New Jersey's Youngest Learners*. REL Mid-Atlantic and NJDOE co-developed a user-friendly [toolkit](#) with resources for district and school leaders, early childhood providers, educators, and families. A recent REL Mid-Atlantic webinar provided an overview of how you can use the toolkit materials to improve school attendance in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten. In case you missed it, a recording of the webinar will be available soon [on the Webinars and Other Technical Resources page](#) of our website.

What's New, What's Next

[Using kindergarten entry assessments to measure whether Philadelphia's students are on track for reading proficiently.](#) The School District of Philadelphia is a partner in the Free Library of Philadelphia's *Read by 4th*, a citywide initiative that aims to substantially increase the percentage of students reading on grade level entering grade 4. To measure the percentage of entering kindergarteners on track to meet this goal, the district partnered with us to develop an indicator based on the [Pennsylvania Kindergarten Entry Inventory](#). This [report](#) highlights key findings from this study.

Coming soon: Measuring school performance for early elementary grades. The early grades lay an important foundation for students' future academic success. Yet, because state testing typically begins at the end of third grade, states are unclear about how well academic growth from kindergarten entry through grade 3 (K-3) is supported at the school level. Be on the lookout for a new report that explores the possibility of developing a new schoolwide measure of student achievement growth in early elementary grades. Stay in the know and follow us [@RELMidAtlantic!](#)

RElevant Blog Posts



Photo by Rich Clement

[Supporting Learning in the Classroom: Back-to-School with REL Mid-Atlantic](#)

Educators hold the keys to unlocking a brighter future for their students, whether engaging with parents, creating a supportive environment that values equity and inclusion, or improving instruction. This [blog post](#) illustrates how the REL Mid-Atlantic is partnering with educators and leaders across the region to identify, evaluate, and implement successful strategies to support classroom learning.

[Multiple Measures Are for Principal Evaluation, Too: Using Teacher Surveys to Better Understand Principal Performance](#)

Evaluating the performance of school principals can be a challenging task. To provide valid, actionable information, principal evaluation systems must be objective, fair, applicable to a range of leadership styles, and capable of differentiating between effective and ineffective school leaders. This [blog post](#) discusses how teacher feedback can be incorporated in principal evaluation systems.

[The Future of School Accountability: Not Set in Stone](#)

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) granted states more discretion to design their own accountability systems. Although every state now has an approved ESSA accountability plan, for many states these plans are works in progress that will be refined over time. The school accountability landscape is not set in stone. In this [blog post](#), REL Mid-Atlantic Director [Brian Gill](#) shares his observations on both current school accountability programs, and future directions these programs may take.

In Case You Missed It

[On Demand: A Virtual Workshop Series on Culturally Responsive Education \(CRP\)](#)



It's a wrap for our workshops on improving equity through culturally responsive teaching and leadership! But you can still access the entire series on YouTube. These hour-long pre-recorded sessions include Q and A from the audience:

[A framework for educational equity and culturally responsive pedagogy](#)

[Research and practice in culturally responsive pedagogy, and how to sustain systemic change](#)

[Implementing district and school policies and practices to support culturally responsive pedagogy](#)

[Developing culturally responsive educators in pre-service programs](#)

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 9 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 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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