



March 2019, vol.6

Message From the Director

Dear Colleagues,

As you may have heard, we've had a recent change in leadership on the REL Pacific contract, and I am pleased to announce that I'm now serving as acting REL Pacific director. Many of you will know me from my prior role as REL Pacific deputy director, a position now held by our new staff member Dr. Christina Tydeman. (For a longer introduction to Christina, please see "Meet Our Staff" on page 4.)

Please know that I, and the rest of our dedicated REL Pacific staff, remain committed to the work we've begun together. For more on that work, we invite you to visit our website—and of course, to read through this latest issue of our newsletter, where you'll hear about our recent visit to the CNMI and learn about some new resources available from the Institute of Education Sciences.

If you have any questions about this transition or anything else, please don't hesitate to reach out to me anytime at dlewis@mcrel.org or at 303.632.5522.

Best regards,

Dale Lewis



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Where in the World is REL Pacific?

² Preparing Students for College and Careers in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands!

Stakeholders in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) have identified college and career readiness as a high priority. Educators in the CNMI are particularly focused on finding solutions to help ease students' transition from high school to college and careers.

Often, students in the CNMI are placed into developmental coursework, rather than credit-bearing classes, upon entry into Northern Marianas College (NMC). To support their focus, REL Pacific staff have been working closely with the CNMI Partnership for College and Career Readiness and Success to design and implement mathematics transition courses to help better prepare students for entry into college-level courses after high school.

Transition courses are intended to ease the transition between high school and college, by, for example, providing an additional year of high school math school instruction and ensuring alignment of high school classes to college-level coursework. They help to prepare students to enter college ready to take on credit-bearing courses that count toward their college degree, which has been associated with higher levels of student achievement and higher college graduation rates.

In October, REL Pacific's work in the CNMI was put on hold, as Super Typhoon Yutu struck the islands and

caused damage to 90 percent of NMC. Stakeholders in the CNMI are eager to get the work back on track while recovery efforts continue and to move forward with their plan to pilot a transition course in fall 2019. To keep the work moving, REL Pacific Managing Researcher Dr. Max Altman will travel to the CNMI to facilitate a two-day training session on March 22 and 23 to focus on co-creating course content for the proposed transition course.

REL Pacific will collaborate with its partner, Carnegie Math Pathways, to adapt some of Carnegie's existing transition course material to support the course design in the CNMI, allowing the Partnership to leverage a preexisting and proven transition course design, while personalizing it to fit the needs of their students.

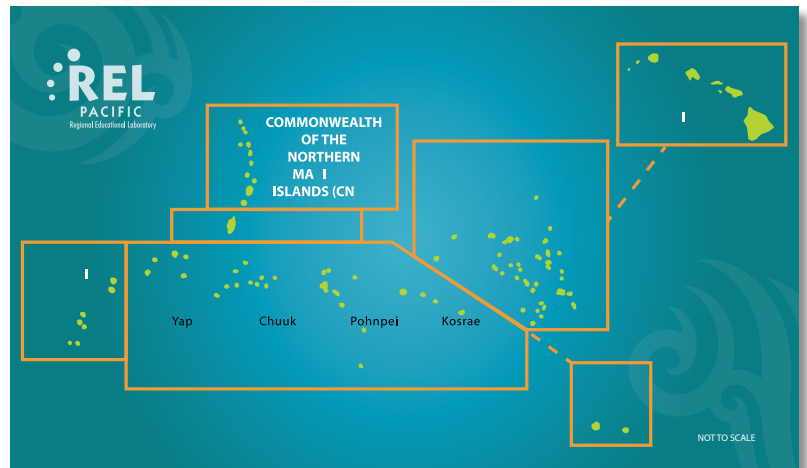
REL Pacific is pleased to be returning to the CNMI to continue the work so soon after the typhoon and is looking forward to supporting stakeholders as they work to ensure that students are prepared for credit-bearing college coursework. Although similar work around developmental education and transition courses has been completed on the mainland U.S., transition courses are a new development throughout much of the Pacific region, and REL Pacific is counting on supporting the CNMI's objectives and improving students' college and career readiness and chances for success.



Damage to Northern Marianas College from Super Typhoon Yutu.

Learn More About the Regional Educational Laboratory Program!

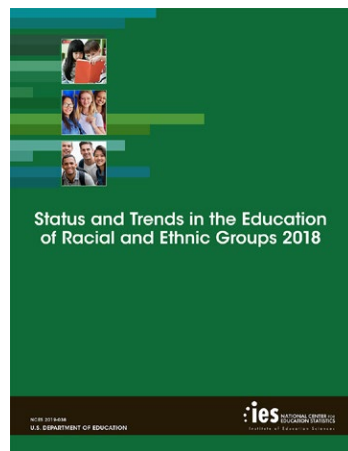
REL Pacific is one of 10 Regional Educational Laboratories established and funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. The laboratories work with partnerships and alliances within their respective regions to develop research and provide training and coaching to support evidence-based education outcomes. The REL Pacific region encompasses approximately 4.9 million square miles and serves 10 Pacific island entities, including American Samoa; the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; the Federated States of Micronesia—Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei and Yap; Guam; Hawai'i; the Republic of the Marshall Islands; and the Republic of Palau. REL Pacific is housed at McREL International's Honolulu office. To learn more about REL Pacific, and the nine other labs in Regional Educational Laboratory Program, visit <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/>.



Check Out These Resources From the Institute of Education Sciences!

Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups 2018 (The National Center for Education Statistics)

This report provides details on the educational progress and challenges students face in the United States by race and ethnicity. This report provides details on the educational progress and challenges that marginalized and minority students face in the United States. In addition, the report features information on the characteristics of public school teachers of varying races/ethnicities and the characteristics of postsecondary institutions serving specific minority racial/ethnic groups.

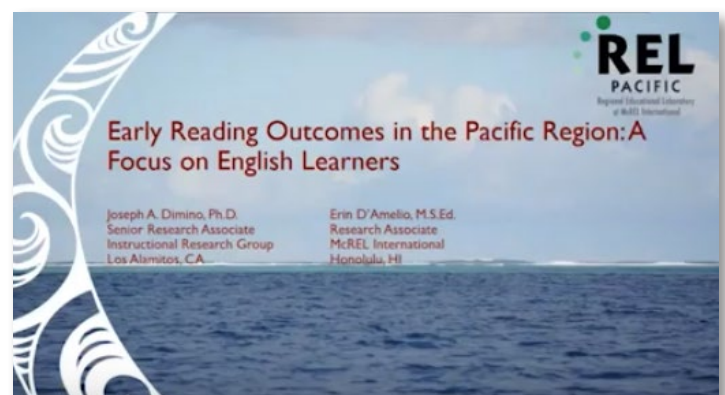


This report is available at: <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2019038>.

Early Reading Outcomes in the Pacific Region: A Focus on English Learners

This REL Pacific webinar provided participants with information on teaching literacy to English learners, presenting recommendations from a What Works Clearinghouse practice guide, *Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School*. The webinar also introduced audience members to REL Pacific's burgeoning Partnerships for the Improvement of Early Literacy.

This archived webinar is available at: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/events/event-12-12-18-focus-on-english-learners.asp>



REL Pacific Welcomes Dr. Christina Tydeman

As the new Deputy Director of REL Pacific, Dr. Christina Tydeman provides leadership and oversight to the REL Pacific team and provides technical support on translating research into practice within the region. Prior to joining REL Pacific, Christina was the Director of the Monitoring and Compliance Branch of the Hawaii Department of Education and served as Associate Dean for the School of Education and Counseling Psychology at the Dominican University of California. Christina brings expertise in multiple areas to REL Pacific, including development, administration, assessment support, and grant coordination. Christina holds a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Dominican University and received her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the University of Hawaii.

Christina has been a career educator for more than 30 years, serving as a teacher and professional development administrator, and she has worked in accountability, assessment, and data systems, all of which will inform her role at REL Pacific. Her career has focused on how educators can use their professional practice to improve their own skills—in addition to improving student outcomes. As a result, Christina is particularly interested in REL Pacific's professional learning partnership work, although she also has experience in other REL Pacific focus areas, such as college and career readiness and early literacy.

Christina looks forward to her work with REL Pacific because of the opportunity to support Partnerships as

they implement solutions to their high-priority needs. As Christina notes, "Understanding the individual and unique needs of our partners are vital. Having the opportunity to really engage in some creative problem solving on the ground to develop solutions that work for our partners is really exciting to me."

Regarding this type of needs-responsive work, Christina affirms the importance of understanding the unique context of each of the jurisdictions REL Pacific serves, noting that "there is not a one-size-fits-all solution for each of them."



In the coming months, Christina looks forward to getting to know REL Pacific's partners and local stakeholders and is already planning trips to visit stakeholders throughout the region. The importance of

engaging with the community at the ground level isn't lost on Christina, as she states, "There is no way that one can really understand the challenges that they might face until one actually experiences them. Until I do that, I will only have a partial understanding of the high-stakes issues at hand."

The REL Pacific team is very excited to have Christina serve as deputy director and wish her the warmest welcome! Christina can be reached at ctydeman@mcrel.org.