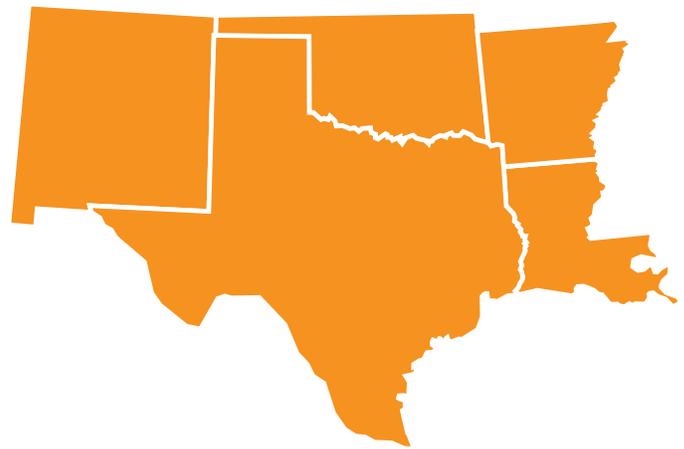




REL Southwest: Collaborative Research Partnerships to Improve Education

Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Southwest is part of a network of 10 regional educational laboratories funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES). The RELs work in partnership with school districts, state education agencies, and other organizations to conduct applied research that seeks to solve practical problems and advance understanding of education challenges and processes. The RELs also provide training, coaching, and technical support related to the application and use of data and research evidence. In addition, the RELs translate research into relevant and actionable resources for practitioners using various communication methods.

To increase the use of research in practice and policymaking, REL Southwest works with stakeholders to identify high-leverage educational needs—that is, needs that if addressed could lead to improved student outcomes in schools and districts in the region. REL Southwest conducts its work through six collaborative research partnerships with stakeholders in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. The work of these partnerships is developed in consultation with key stakeholders, including state education agency (SEA) and local education agency (LEA) staff, and informed by partners' expertise and knowledge of the priorities of their states and districts.



Each partnership primarily focuses its work in one state, allowing researchers and practitioners to build connections and dive deeply into problems of practice. However, all states in the region can participate in REL-facilitated communities of practice that share best practices and explore research findings from the partnerships. REL Southwest also conducts shorter-term and more focused collaborations in response to SEA and LEA requests outside of the partnership structure.

REL Southwest's collaborative research partnerships include the following:

- ▶ Our **Southwest College and Career Readiness Research Partnership** with the Arkansas Department of Education and other partners is supporting the development and refinement of college and career readiness indicators and the improvement of data systems and use of data visualization to increase the number of high school students actively engaged in college, career preparation, military service, and competitive employment after graduation.
- ▶ Our **Southwest Teacher Preparation and Professional Development Research Partnership** with the Louisiana Department of Education and other partners is supporting continuous improvement of the statewide [Believe and Prepare program](#)¹ to increase the number of qualified teachers in every classroom.
- ▶ Our **Southwest English Learners Research Partnership** with the New Mexico Public Education Department and other partners seeks to support English learner students in meeting state targets for growth and attainment through the implementation of evidence-based services and programs.
- ▶ Our **Southwest Early Childhood Education Research Partnership** with the Oklahoma State Department of Education and other partners seeks to examine and address issues of equity in early childhood education and assess and reduce gaps in children's knowledge and skills at kindergarten entry.
- ▶ Our **Southwest Networked Improvement Communities (NICs) Research Partnership** with the Oklahoma State Department of Education is building state and district capacity to use data for improvement and to implement NICs to help districts identify and scale up effective and innovative practices that focus on well-rounded educational efforts for students. This approach is part of Oklahoma's Every Student Succeeds Act state plan and supports the [Oklahoma Champions of Excellence program](#).²
- ▶ Our **Southwest School Improvement Research Partnership** with the Texas Education Agency and other partners is examining the state system of support for district and school improvement initiatives and the degree to which the initiatives improve district, school, and student outcomes.

REL Southwest offers the following supports to the collaborative research partnerships and stakeholders in the Southwest region.



Applied research studies that address partnerships' research questions



Events that bridge research to practice and support the understanding of existing research



Workshops that support the use of data and research



Coaching that supports the use of data and research



Technical support such as survey, interview or observation protocol development, overviews of existing research, or tool development



Reviews of studies and interventions to determine level of evidence to support implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act



Ask A REL annotated bibliographies produced in response to stakeholder questions

¹ To learn more about the Louisiana Department of Education's Believe and Prepare program, visit <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/teaching/believe-and-prepare>.

² To learn more about the Oklahoma Champions of Excellence program, visit <http://sde.ok.gov/sde/TitleIVA>.