Ask a REL

Free Reference Desk Responses to Your Education Questions!

What is Ask a REL?
An online reference desk to inform education decision-making.

Who is it for?
Parents, practitioners, district-level leaders, state agency staff, policymakers, anyone seeking a research-based, quick-turnaround response on an education topic.

What kinds of questions are asked?
- From a principal: What does research say about the effectiveness of different phonics programs in the early grades?
- From a nonprofit network director: How do high school counselors impact students’ college preparation?
- From an early childhood education program administrator: Is there neuroscience literature on using singing and chanting to promote vocabulary in young dual language learners?
- From a parent and PTA president: What research has been done on the relationship between classroom temperature and learning, and is there an optimal school temperature?

For an archive of responses: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/west/Ask

About REL West
As part of the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Program network, REL West responds to educational needs in Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah by providing access to high-quality, evidence-based education research; conducting applied research studies; interpreting and applying research evidence; and coaching on data analytics. REL West has longstanding working relationships with state and local educators throughout the region.

Where do the answers come from?
Each of the 10 RELs provides the service in its region. To respond, REL staff:
- Access databases for relevant published research.
- Refer the requester to another organization for more tailored expertise, if appropriate.

What do responses look like?
Ask-a-REL responses include providing references, referrals, and information on education research, briefs, articles, and organizations.

Responses may include:
- Citations and abstracts of rigorously conducted educational research
- Citations and summaries of related information on the topic
- Information on the databases and search terms used to identify the included references

Submit your question at relwest@WestEd.org