



As summer winds down and a new school year ramps up, REL Appalachia staff hope you found rest and rejuvenation over the last few months. Now, as you look for new ways to inspire and connect with the students and families you serve, this newsletter offers some resources you can integrate into your back-to-school activities and core instruction this fall. And in the spirit of new beginnings, we also introduce our new director of REL Appalachia.

A Message from the Director

Greetings! I'm Victoria Schaefer and I have the honor of serving as the new director of REL Appalachia. I've led training, coaching, and technical support activities at REL Appalachia for nearly five years and have experience at all levels of the education system — local, state, and federal. Though I've called Virginia home for 20 years, I began my education career in rural North Carolina as a middle and high school educator, and eventually a trained researcher.



As the new director, I'm committed to leveraging the many strengths that dedicated educators bring to the region as well as lightening their load by providing resources and learning opportunities that advance their top priorities. My grassroots experience guides me the most — remembering the students I've taught and fellow educators I've served alongside. I'll bring my knowledge of the region and education research and practice to bear on our work. Please [reach out to me](#) at any time, as I'd love to connect.

Featured Resources



As you gear up for the school year ahead, explore these REL Appalachia [resources for fall planning](#), organized by topic. There's a resource for every need — from **data use to trauma-sensitive practices**.



For our early educators: As you settle into the new school year and get to know your students, consider sharing with families ways they can practice **early literacy skills** at home. This REL Appalachia [blog post](#) highlights resources from across the REL program, including videos and activities families can do together.



Back-to-school is also an opportunity to reconnect with educators in your networks and share ideas and strategies. Check out this recent [REL Corner](#) full of freely available resources with evidence-based practices for **literacy and numeracy**, from the REL program and the What



Want to learn strategies from practitioners who've used them? The WWC, with REL Southeast, released a webinar on evidence-based recommendations to help students improve their **literacy skills**. Watch the [recorded webinar](#) and read the accompanying [handout of resources](#).



Eager to set a welcoming tone for families at the beginning of the year? Check out REL Appalachia's [Expanding School Supports for Kinship Caregivers and Grandfamilies Community of Practice](#). We discuss the importance of **inclusive language** and provide strategies for how to use inclusive language in schools. An action-planning worksheet will help you get started.



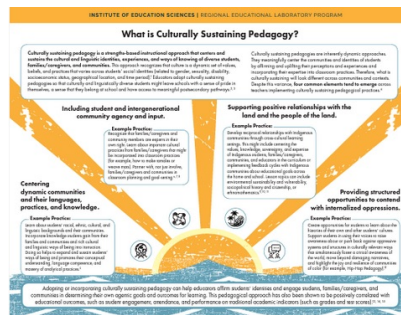
In case you missed it, check out REL Appalachia's presentation at the Community Colleges of Appalachia Conference on [Creating Pathways to Trauma-Sensitive Instructional Environments in Community Colleges](#).

Did you know...

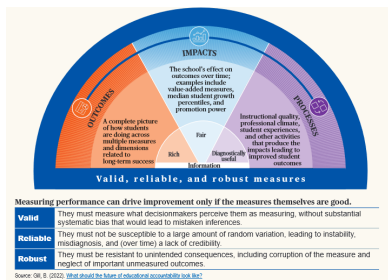
REL Appalachia collaborates on pressing national needs with subject matter experts from the nine other RELs? Here are several recent products from these cross-REL collaborations:



[Leveraging Technology for Student Success](#) helps district leaders make informed decisions around the adoption and effective use of **technology in their schools**.



[What is Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy?](#) outlines key elements and example practices to support educators who use or want to use **culturally sustaining pedagogy**.



[Outcomes, Impacts, and Processes: A Framework for Understanding School Performance](#) offers states and districts an **improved measurement strategy** to explore how students are doing, how much the school contributes to how students are doing, and what is happening in the school.



[Developing Strong Foundational Literacy Skills in Children — It Takes All of Us!](#) provides links to resources on **foundational literacy** for communities, state and district leaders, families and caregivers, and teachers and school leaders.

Out and About with REL Appalachia

We'd also love to see *you* while we're on the road. Please come say hi!

NCSM 55th Annual Conference



At the National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics (NCSM) [55th annual conference](#) in Washington, DC, on October 28–31, we'll co-present with staff from the Kentucky Department of Education on a new **math coaching observation rubric** we co-developed to provide formative and summative feedback about coaching effectiveness.

National Forum to Advance Rural Education

At the [National Forum to Advance Rural Education](#) convention and research symposium, November 16–17 in Chattanooga, Tennessee, we'll present on four dimensions of **college and career preparation** for rural youth.



Learning Forward Annual Conference

And learn more about how to integrate **social-emotional learning strategies and techniques into math** instruction at the [Learning Forward annual conference](#), on December 3–6 in National Harbor, Maryland, near Washington, DC.

In Case You Missed It

Visit our [May 2023 newsletter](#), and please [subscribe](#) if you're not already on our distribution list.



Connect With Us!



REL Appalachia is deeply committed to supporting educators in our region. For the latest news and updates and resources, [follow us on Twitter](#) and tag us [@REL_Appalachia](#).

If you have stories, successes, challenges, or other feedback you'd like to share, please reach out to us [via email](#)! We'd love to hear from you!



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