



# NEWSLETTER

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## Latest News from the Director



Photo by Rich Clement

I hope you all had some opportunity to relax, recharge, and enjoy time with family over the holiday break. Pressures on educators have been enormous in the wake of the pandemic; a recent post on our blog, written by Terry Ball of the Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals, discusses the importance of self-care for school leaders, offering some suggestions for staying sane in a challenging environment.

A second recent post on our blog is from yours truly, based on the findings from a [brand-new white paper](#) that is our first study report since our new partnerships were formed last year. We are very excited about the results, which demonstrate how a new statistical approach can substantially improve the accuracy of accountability measures for small student subgroups. Pennsylvania is leading the way in implementing those measures to help avoid mis-identifying schools for improvement, but we think every state should be considering the approach as a way to simultaneously improve the accuracy of measures and increase the focus on equitable student outcomes. More details are below, in the blog, and on the REL website. Don't hesitate to get in touch if your state or district is intrigued!

Meanwhile, work in our various state and local partnerships continues; you can find a few updates in this newsletter.

**Brian Gill**  
Director, REL Mid-Atlantic

## On the RElevant Blog

### [Navigating New Waters of Self-Care for Principals in the Post-Pandemic World](#)



School principals cannot care for their students and staff effectively unless they care for themselves first. In the post-pandemic world, this can feel challenging. Our Governing Board member Terry Ball, executive director of the Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals, looks at some of the ways they can do so.

### [The Next Frontier in School Accountability Measures: Improving Reliability and Subgroup Inclusion at the Same Time](#)



The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) seeks to promote equity in student outcomes by insisting that schools be accountable not only for overall performance, but also for the performance of subgroups of students, especially those who historically have not been well-served. But ESSA also recognizes that results for very small subgroups may be statistically unreliable; states are therefore permitted to set minimum thresholds for the number of students included for subgroup accountability.

But this means that large numbers of students across the country are excluded from subgroup accountability simply because, in their particular schools, their subgroups are small. For students in small subgroups, equity is sacrificed to ensure reliability. In the best of worlds, this trade-off would not be necessary. Our director Brian Gill blogs about how states can circumvent the trade-off and simultaneously promote equity and reliability using a new statistical method called Bayesian stabilization.

## Updates from Our Partnerships



### **New Partnership with DC Public Schools Targets Students Needing Intensive Support**

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) intervene early so students can catch up with their peers. DC Public Schools (DCPS) is leveraging COVID emergency relief funding to address inequities in student performance and social-emotional resilience exacerbated by the pandemic. [Read about our partnership](#) with the district to draw on evidence-based approaches as DCPS embeds MTSS district-wide.

### **Around the Region: Other News from Our Partners**

- The [New Jersey Department of Education \(NJDOE\)](#) aims to ensure that every student in the state is taught by at least one teacher of color between preschool and grade 12. We're working with NJDOE and 11 districts across the state to increase their capacity to use data as they seek to hire more teachers of color.
- In response to persistent disparities in student outcomes and a history of structural racism, the [School District of Philadelphia](#) is working to become more equitable. The Equity Partners Fellowship, a yearlong experiential learning opportunity for staff, is part of this initiative. We've held three coaching sessions with the district's team; three more are planned to build on the experiences of the first cohort of fellows and prepare for cohort 2 in 2023.

- We've been working with the [Delaware Department of Education](#) as it implements a revised teacher evaluation system statewide. The team has held three coaching sessions to help the agency gather and analyze data from the pilot.

## Latest Department of Education Publications

### New Education Across America Indicators from NCES

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) released five indicators focused on rural areas. These indicators, which summarize data patterns and provide analyses of the rural education experience, cover the following topics:

- [Rural Students' Access to the Internet](#)
- [Early Childhood Care and Education Programs in Rural Areas](#)
- [Staff in Rural Public Elementary and Secondary School Systems](#)
- [Postsecondary Enrollment Status of Youth From Rural Areas](#)
- [Educational Attainment in Rural Areas](#)

## Connect with Us

Please reach out anytime at [RELMidAtlantic@mathematica-mpr.com](mailto:RELMidAtlantic@mathematica-mpr.com) to share your ideas about important issues the REL Mid-Atlantic could address, request free technical assistance, or ask questions about how we can help you in your work.



For more frequent updates from us and our nine REL partners across the country and to receive the latest research updates from the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, please follow us on Twitter [@RELMidAtlantic!](#)