

# NEWSLETTER

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## Director Updates



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

A primary function of the Regional Educational Laboratories is to help state and local agencies develop the capacity to collect and analyze data that can inform decisionmaking. We aim to help your agencies [be data driven rather than data drowning](#). (Unfortunately, it is all too easy to drown in data that are unreliable, invalid, or irrelevant.) Below, we briefly describe a handful of examples of our capacity-building work supporting data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation.

What sort of data capacity does your agency need? Let us know—we're eager to help.



# Building Capacity to Move the Needle in Education

We help our partners get closer to their goals by bridging the gap between research and practice and building their capacity step-by-step, one project at a time. Below are some highlights.



## Facilitating Community Conversations and Analyzing Data



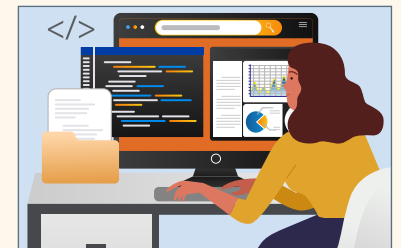
We're building the capacity of Intermediate Unit (IU) leads across Pennsylvania to effectively engage their partners and host community listening sessions focused on school safety data. Efforts also include coaching Pennsylvania Department of Education staff and IUs to analyze the information gained and use it to recommend improvements in collecting and using Safe Schools data.

## Hosting Focus Groups

As part of an ongoing effort to implement multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) across District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), and to do so with fidelity, we helped DCPS get feedback on the MTSS from DCPS Central Office teams, including Attendance and Support Services, Strategic School Operations, Curriculum and Professional Development, and Learning and Development Science. We co-led the first focus group, and from there DCPS staff were able to facilitate additional focus groups on their own.

## Stabilizing School Performance Measures

We've worked closely with the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) to explore how it could improve the reliability and stability of school performance measures, particularly for small subgroups of students. Capacity-building work has included helping NJDOE technical support staff to understand and articulate the advantages of Bayesian methods for stabilizing performance measures, and how to independently code and run Bayesian models to stabilize measures for schools across the state.



## Training Trainers

We also worked with NJDOE to design and co-lead a coaching series. The purpose of the series was to build district capacity to use data and implement practices aimed at increasing the diversity of NJDOE's educator workforce. Our [recent blog post](#) highlights this effort. We're now coaching state and regional education agency staff so they can deliver the same series to additional districts in the state.

[Learn more about REL Mid-Atlantic partnerships and projects.](#)

## RELS Make a Difference

Learn how different REL research and development partnerships across the country are improving opportunities and outcomes for learners in this IES blog series. Our work to promote data-driven decision making by improving school accountability measures is featured in the newest post!

- [Data-Driven Decision-Making in Education: How REL Work Makes a Difference](#)
- [Making a Difference in Literacy and Math Outcomes](#)
- [Making a Difference in Educator Recruitment and Retention](#)

## Out and About

### Evidence Summit

In partnership with state and local education agencies, we have conducted technical support and applied research projects to improve the validity, reliability, and actionability of multiple measures of school performance. REL Mid-Atlantic director, Brian Gill, recently presented at the U.S. Department of Education's Evidence Summit on how improved performance measures can be helpful diagnostic tools in addressing three key focus areas of the U.S. Department of Education's "Raise the Bar" initiative.

Learn more:

- [Accountability Community of Practice, Projects, and Products](#)
- [Outcomes, Impacts, and Processes: A Framework for Understanding School Performance](#)
- [Related Blog Posts](#)

### New Jersey Convening

We were excited to attend the 6th Annual Diversifying the Teacher Workforce Convening in New Jersey, hosted by the New Jersey Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. REL team members will use new insights gained from this convening to strengthen our partnership work with NJDOE.



### DCPS Partnership Meeting



REL team members had a great [partnership](#) meeting with DCPS and held two working sessions focused on fortifying data systems and MTSS reporting. Together, they synthesized focus group findings and identified persistent challenges experienced by those who work with MTSS data regularly.

## Connect with Us



Find this newsletter and all past issues on the [REL Mid-Atlantic Newsletter webpage!](#)