



Update From the Deputy Director

As we start 2023, we reflect on our first year in the 2022-2027 REL contract cycle. Our charge is to identify high-leverage needs and work in partnership to support the generation and use of research, evidence, and evidence-based practices to improve education.

In 2022, we developed partnerships in all five states in the Northwest region to tackle challenging issues, such as increasing teacher recruitment and retention in rural schools, improving student literacy, raising high school graduation rates, and providing access to high quality early childhood education.



Through our partnerships, we have the privilege of collaborating with dedicated educators, administrators, and policymakers. For example: In December, principals and teachers in Montana carved out time to strategize about how they will apply evidence-based practices around literacy assessments and data in their schools. State leaders in Oregon participated in a working group to refine their framework and develop clear indicators to track student success plan initiatives. In January, rural district leaders in Washington will attend sessions to learn evidence-based practices for expanding blended learning. Across the region, we are energized and inspired by the commitment to improving outcomes for all students.

Below, read more about our literacy partnership in Montana, catch up on our past newsletters and help celebrate 20 years of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. We look forward to sharing more with you in 2023!

Accelerating Literacy Outcomes in Montana Through Evidence and Data Use

Laurel Public Schools, a Montana district of five schools and approximately 2,000 students, aims to improve student reading outcomes by helping educators more effectively interpret and respond to literacy data. The district's 2022 strategic plan includes educators using evidence-based practices regarding the use of data to help target resources and support to improve student learning.

[REL Northwest is supporting](#) Laurel's strategic vision by providing technical support and coaching related to the consistent use of data-based decision-making in literacy instruction. The collaboration with Laurel involves educators at all grade levels (K-12) so that the entire district has a coherent system for data use in literacy.



State assessment results from spring 2019 showed that only 50% of Montana's students were at or above proficient in reading in grades 3-8; for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, that percentage was 25%. Achievement gaps between White students and students of other races and ethnicities range from 10 to 35 percentage points. With guidance and support from the Montana Office of Public Instruction, districts are working to differentiate literacy instruction to raise achievement for all students.

[Read the full blog](#) on our Website ...

Meet Our REL Northwest Governing Board

We're excited to announce five new REL Northwest Governing Board members. Our board represents a wide variety of roles across our five Northwest states and includes individuals that represent chief state school officers, superintendents, principals, institutions of higher education, teachers, parents, businesses, and researchers.

Our Governing Board provides strategic guidance on REL Northwest work to maximize local effectiveness and leverages its regional networks to amplify and disseminate REL products. Please see the bios of our new members (listed below) on the [REL Northwest website](#).

Superintendents

Rob Sauer, Superintendent, Homedale School District (ID)

Josh Garcia, Superintendent, Tacoma Public Schools (WA)

Teachers

Jerad Koepp, Native Student Program Specialist, North Thurston Public Schools (WA)
Ethelyn Tumulad-Granados, Language Arts and AVID, Clackamas High School (OR)

Higher Education

TJ Bliss, Chief Academic Officer, State Board of Education (ID).

2022 REL Northwest Newsletters

In case you missed them, see our REL Northwest newsletters from 2022:

- **May:** [Who We Are and What We Do](#)
- **June:** [Supporting Alaska's Literacy Efforts](#)
- **August:** [6 Strategies for Effective School Family Engagement Events](#)
- **October:** [Early Learning a Top Priority for NW Partners](#)

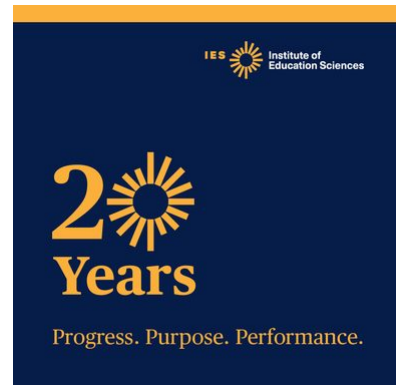
And [please subscribe](#) to our newsletter if you're not already on our distribution list.

Institute of Education Sciences Turns 20!

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) is [celebrating 20 years](#). As the U.S. Department of Education's independent, nonpartisan, statistics, research, and evaluation arm, IES has worked with educators, parents, policymakers, researchers, and the public since 2002 to transform education sciences and improve outcomes for all learners.

“While IES has experienced many successes over the last 20 years,” says Mark Schneider, director of the Institute of Education Sciences, “today we celebrate the future. Our experts and the researchers we fund accelerate learning and continually set a new standard for rigor in the education sciences.”

During the coming months, IES [will share stories](#) of its work and the significant impact it's had on education policy and practice.



REL Recommended Reads

REL Midwest: [Five recommendations for teaching fractions at the start of middle school](#)

In Illinois, REL Midwest is partnering with education leaders and school districts to develop a Teaching Fractions Toolkit to target gaps in middle school students' math achievement.

REL Appalachia: [Planting SEAD in Mathematics for Meaningful Learning](#)

REL Appalachia explores some of the content it shared with Kentucky educators on integrating social and emotional learning (SEL) into mathematics, including the "why" behind the approach and resources for getting started.

REL Central & Mid-Atlantic: [How RELs are Using Research-Practice Partnerships to Foster Equitable Learning Environments](#)

As equity discussions occur across the RELs and within school systems across the nation, it's important to avoid approaching 'equity' as performative, or yet another buzzword. We need to deeply integrate equity into our beliefs, mindsets, and practices to ensure that all children in our schools are provided with the resources they need to succeed.



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