

## REL Pacific Newsletter

March 2023, vol. 5



### From the Director

Dear Colleagues,

We hope the year has gotten off to a positive start for you, full of good health and happiness. For REL Pacific, we have begun Year 2 of our contract cycle and we welcome the opportunity to continue the important work being done across the Pacific Region with our education partners and stakeholders.

Recently, I had the honor of traveling to three of our jurisdictions—Kosrae in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and American Samoa—to meet in person with our partners, partnerships, and project teams. Each visit was invaluable for us to develop or reaffirm partnerships and build stronger relationships with educators and school leaders. I look forward to many more visits like these with our partners and team members in other jurisdictions in the near future.

Speaking of partnerships, we continue our efforts to fully and meaningfully support our five existing partnerships with Guam, the Republic of Palau, the Commonwealth of the Mariana Islands (CNMI), Hawai'i, and FSM. You can read about our current projects in these jurisdictions below. We are also in the process of developing partnerships and potential projects with RMI and American Samoa.

We also want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and welcome new education leaders in several jurisdictions. Please know that our goal is to maintain a reliable continuity of REL services as your organizations transition through important changes. We are here to assist you, your team, and others in any way that we can.

Last, we are pleased in this newsletter to introduce you to two of our researchers who are more than happy and capable to answer any questions you may have about REL Pacific strategies, partnerships, or their project teams.

As always, please don't hesitate to reach out with questions, concerns, or requests for assistance at [relpacific@mcrel.org](mailto:relpacific@mcrel.org).

Best regards,

Christina Tydeman  
REL Pacific Director

## New and Upcoming from REL Pacific

### Upcoming Webinar: Register Now

#### Assessment Systems in Indigenous Contexts

Wednesday, March 15, 1:00–2:30 p.m. HST

Wed 3/15: 12:00 p.m. SST | 4:00 p.m. PT | 5:00 p.m. MT | 6:00 p.m. CT | 7:00 p.m. ET  
Thurs 3/16: 8:00 a.m. PWT | 9:00 a.m. CHST/YAPT/CHUT | 10:00 a.m. PONT | 11:00 a.m. MHT

Research shows that Indigenous students benefit from culturally responsive and culturally sustaining education, but assessment is not always at the forefront of these conversations. In this REL Pacific webinar, Dr. Sharon Nelson-Barber, with practitioner panelists from Hawai'i and North Dakota, will share their experiences and considerations at different levels of the education system for moving toward assessment systems that better support and highlight the skills and knowledge of Indigenous students.

[Learn More and Register](#)



### A Community of Practice (CoP) to Build a Culture of Data Use

In this blog post, Drs. Erin Chaparro and Natasha Saelua provide an overview of the qualities of a healthy data culture, highlight positive examples of data use and data culture in the Pacific region, and briefly summarize how technical assistance providers who are not members of Indigenous communities that they serve can support data culture development in a respectful way.

They also describe the establishment of a CoP for Pacific region education leaders to collectively learn, share, and problem-solve related to establishing and sustaining a high-quality culture of data use within their schools and systems. In the first CoP meeting on February 27, representatives from both K–12 and institutes of higher education across the Pacific region joined REL Pacific staff to begin sharing stories of successes and challenges related to data use in their organizations. If you are interested in joining these monthly discussions between now and September, please reach out to [relpacific@mcrel.org](mailto:relpacific@mcrel.org) for more information

[Read the Post](#)



## Supporting a Culture of Data Literacy and Use to Improve Instructional Quality

For a data system and culture to be most effective, data must be available, relevant, useful, and actionable to educators across the school system, from classroom teachers to central office leaders and policymakers. This fact sheet provides educators with some key considerations for developing and effective culture of data use that can help improve instruction and student support services.

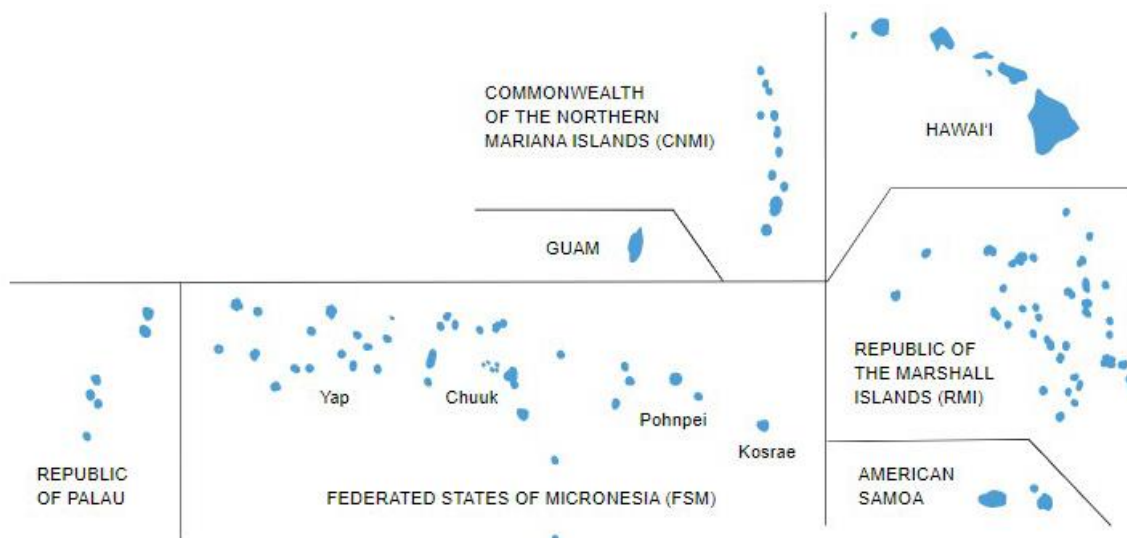
[Fact Sheet](#)

## Carnegie Summit on Improvement in Education

Ben Cronkright from REL Pacific, will present a poster session at 2023 Carnegie Summit, taking place April 23-25 in San Diego. The session, titled “‘Āina-based and Place-based Education in Hawai‘i Schools: Charting a NIC’s Journey to Equitable Practice,” will share information on our partnership project with a group of charter school leaders and teachers using a networked improvement community approach to develop a framework for place-based and ‘āina-based education program design and implementation. Two principals from schools participating in the NIC, Dr. Meahilahila Kelling from Ke Kula ‘o Samuel M. Kamakau Charter School and Dr. Denise Espania from Mālama Honua Charter School, will attend as well and co-present the session with Mr. Cronkright. To learn more or register for the conference, click the button below.

[Register Here](#)

# Partnership Projects



\*Islands are not to scale or in the accurate geographic position

Following are brief descriptions of our current projects with partners across the region. To learn more about any of these projects, please contact us at [relpacific@mcrel.org](mailto:relpacific@mcrel.org).

## **CNMI: Improving Reading Through Data Literacy**

REL Pacific is supporting CNMI Public School System (PSS) educators as they work to improve their data-driven decision making when assigning students to Tier 2 reading interventions, as well as identifying potential areas of improvement for Tier 1 literacy instruction. By the end of this project, PSS central office staff and principals will have developed and launched a plan addressing early literacy intervention, while building their knowledge of evidence-based data practices within a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) to support early literacy.

## **FSM: Developing a Culturally Sustaining Instructional Model**

We are supporting national and state education leaders in FSM in their work to improve systemwide teacher planning and instruction by developing state-specific instructional models that can build a shared understanding of how learning works in their educational context and identify effective strategies teachers can use to support student learning. The goal of the project is to create instructional models for each state that elevate and sustain cultural practices and ways of knowing while achieving academic standards and dual-language policies that are currently in development across FSM.

## **FSM: Supporting the Development of Indigenous Culture Curricula**

This project supports efforts of the Yap State Department of Education (YDOE) in FSM in improving the quality of Indigenous Yapese culture education in K–12 schools across Yap. The REL Pacific team is supporting YDOE as they update their Indigenous culture curricula and plan to train YDOE culture teachers about the new curricula.

## **Guam: Evidence-based Teaching Strategies to Support Elementary and Middle School Students' Success in Math**

We are providing Guam teachers with training and coaching on evidence-based teaching strategies for mathematics. Through the professional learning sessions, REL Pacific is helping teachers build their capacity to apply recommendations from the What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide [Improving Mathematical Problem Solving in Grades 4 Through 8](#). The project is also helping principals and instructional coaches increase their capacity to support teachers as they implement the teaching strategies.

### **Hawai'i: Creating a Working Theory of Practice Improvement to Support Development of the Hawaiian Place-Based Education NIC**

Through this training and coaching project, REL Pacific is working with a cohort of charter school leaders and educators in a networked improvement community (NIC) to explore best practices for place-based, project-based, and 'āina-based instruction and assessment. With REL Pacific facilitation support and resources informed by research, the cohort is establishing their NIC processes, components, goals, and monitoring measures, and identifying common design elements and implementation practices that support high-quality place-based, project-based, and culturally sustaining learning.

### **Hawai'i: Performance Assessments for Place-based and 'Āina-based Charter School Classrooms**

This project supports capacity building for charter school administrators and teachers as they design performance assessments that measure standards-aligned student learning outcomes in place-based and project-based tasks. The project is centered on the use of high-quality, curriculum-embedded common performance assessments because of the potential to positively influence teaching and learning.

### **Palau: Coaching on Identifying and Measuring Indicators of Effective Teaching**

REL Pacific is working with private school leaders in Palau to create systems to develop, coach, and retain effective teachers. Private schools serve a large portion of the overall student population, so through training and coaching, we are supporting private school leaders to identify meaningful indicators of effective teaching, collect data to measure each indicator, and use the data for decision-making and continuous improvement. The project goal is to help the schools develop structures that support the development and retaining of a qualified and effective educator workforce well-positioned to improve student learning outcomes.

## **Meet Our Staff**

As in our previous newsletters, we're continuing to introduce you to our REL Pacific staff members, all of whom are committed to supporting and serving you as you tackle your problems of practice. In this issue, get to know two of our researchers working on projects across the region.



### **Ms. Erin D'Amelio**

Ms. Erin D'Amelio has worked for REL Pacific since 2018, leading and supporting technical assistance projects in FSM and CNMI. Within FSM, Ms. D'Amelio lead a project that supported the development and implementation of Kosrae's bilingual language policy, and she now leads and supports projects developing and piloting culturally sustaining instructional models. In CNMI, Ms. D'Amelio has supported educators as they deepened and refined their data use practices and processes for early grade literacy interventions. She is currently earning her Ph.D. in educational psychology at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. She holds master's degree in international educational development from the University of Pennsylvania and a dual bachelor's degree in English and French from Lafayette College.

## Dr. Natasha Saelua

Dr. Natasha Saelua provides project-based research services and capacity-building support to education stakeholders across the Pacific Region. In her work for REL Pacific since 2020, Dr. Saelua supported the FSM state departments of education in Kosrae to develop principals as instructional leaders and in Chuuk to build staff capacity for conducting program evaluations. She currently supports partnerships with CNMI and FSM, and co-leads a cross-regional community of practice focused on contextualizing data use and culture in the Pacific. Dr. Saelua earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees (in history and Asian American studies, respectively) from the University of California–Los Angeles and her doctorate in higher education from Indiana University.



*Keep an eye out for our next newsletter to meet more of our staff!*

## Resources

### **Strengthening School Improvement in Palau Through the Circles of Success Model**

The Region 18 Comprehensive Center recently released a blog post detailing the support provided to the Palau Ministry of Education using the Circles of Success training program, to build capacity in enhancing classroom instruction efforts.

[Learn More](#)

### **School Pulse Panel Updated with Pacific Region Data**

The National Center for Education Statistics has updated its School Pulse Panel with information from four U.S. Outlying Areas—American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands—with information as of December 2022 on the prevalence of remote learning, COVID-related quarantines, internet accessibility at students' homes, availability of tutoring, and more.

Click the link below and scroll down the page to find the heading titled “New! School Pulse Panel data on Outlying Area Public Schools.

[Find the Data](#)

### **New What Works Clearinghouse Intervention Reports**

The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) recently reviewed the research on dual language programs, in which classroom teachers instruct students in English and in a second language. Based on the research, the WWC found moderate evidence that dual language programs positively impacted student literacy achievement in English.

WWC also recently reviewed research on Reading Apprenticeship, a professional development program that aims to help teachers improve student literacy skills. The review identified moderate evidence that the program impacted student achievement and overall GPA.

[Dual Language Programs](#)

[Reading Apprenticeship](#)

## REL Pacific Resources



### COVID-19 Resources

Check out the RELs' COVID-19 resource page for updated information and resources for educators and families.

[See More](#)



### Products

Check out REL Pacific's products page on the new IES website! Click to see our research studies, blogs, and infographics!

[Read More](#)



### Research Tools

Looking for relevant, actionable research tools? Click the link below for a variety of resources across 24 topic areas!

[Explore More](#)

### We're on Twitter!

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