

## REL Pacific Newsletter

September 2023, vol. 7



### Letter from the Director

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome back, school leaders and teachers, and congratulations to you on a successful start to the new academic year! We hope this school year is full of opportunities to learn new knowledge and skills, deepen capacity, collaborate with colleagues, and engage with students and families.

In the spirit of new beginnings, REL Pacific would like to take this opportunity to announce that we have a new deputy director on board, Dr. Siomara (Sio) Valladares. To learn more about Dr. Valladares, check out the staff section of this newsletter.

REL Pacific also welcomes two new leaders of Guam's education systems. We are excited to connect with the superintendent of the Guam Department of Education (GDOE), Dr. Kenneth Swanson, and the president of the University of Guam, Dr. Anita Borja Enriquez. REL Pacific staff look forward to being on site at GDOE for the Evidence-Based Teaching Strategies to Support Elementary and Middle School Students' Success in Math Coaching Session 5 on September 19–20, as well as to supporting GDOE and other Guam education agencies.

As we've witnessed Guam's community resilience in continuing their Typhoon Mawar recovery efforts, we're also reflecting on the strength and interconnectedness of island communities, as we've experienced in Hawai'i firsthand in the weeks following the devastating fires on Maui and Hawai'i Island. We're honored to live and work alongside our partners who continue to serve our students, our future leaders, amidst these extremely challenging circumstances.

REL Pacific is proud to continue important work through our five partnerships with the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Guam, Hawai'i, and Palau. We are also excited to share that we are launching two new partnerships with the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), which you can read more about below, and American Samoa, which we'll feature in the next newsletter.

As for where you'll find us next, REL Pacific is presenting a virtual pre-conference workshop for the Hawai'i-Pacific Evaluation Association (H-PEA) Conference on September 21. We will also be leading a roundtable discussion at the Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment (CREA) annual conference on October 4–6 in Chicago. Please say hello if you join us at either event!

Additionally, we look forward to seeing the REL Pacific Governing Board members at the beginning of November for our fall governing board meeting in Pohnpei, hosted at the College of Micronesia–FSM. It's always a pleasure and privilege to reconnect with familiar and friendly colleagues and discuss current priorities and high-leverage needs.

Finally, we want to thank all of our hosts in Kosrae for organizing the Micronesian Teachers Education Conference (MTEC) in July. REL Pacific staff had the honor to present culturally sustaining instructional models and related REL Pacific projects in the FSM. We are thrilled to participate in large, in-person events again!

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

Best regards,

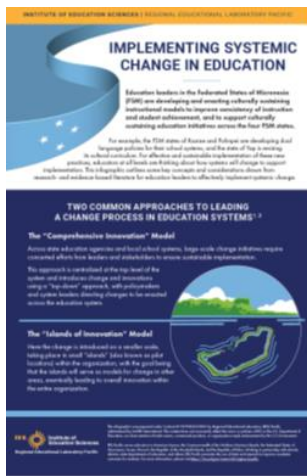
Christina Tydeman  
REL Pacific Director

## Partnership Spotlight: Federated States of Micronesia

### ***Partnership to Improve Teacher Effectiveness by Developing and Implementing an Evidence-Based, Culturally Responsive Model for Instruction***

Our partnership with the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) is focused on improving academic outcomes by building teacher capacity, supporting schools to meet accreditation standards, and bridging the gap between the languages students use in and out of the classroom. FSM education leaders believe that identifying and adopting appropriate, evidence-based instructional models can support systemwide change to address these high-leverage needs.

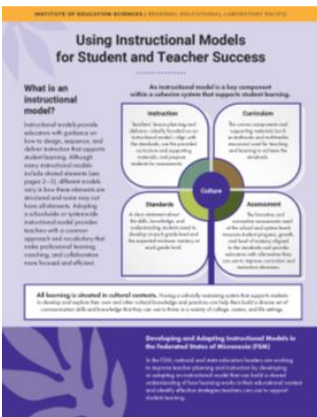
Specifically, the partnership is aiming to develop an instructional model that reflects and sustains students and teachers' rich cultural and linguistic backgrounds. With these goals in mind, check out this partnership's resources and events on the next page.



## Infographic: Implementing Systemic Change in Education

This infographic provides an overview of approaches to leading systemic change in education and the systems change elements of initiation, implementation, and institutionalization. Examples of a systems approach to change are shared in the context of FSM's local K–12 systems developing and implementing culturally sustaining education initiatives.

[Infographic](#)



## Infographic: Using Instructional Models for Student and Teacher Success

Instructional models provide educators with guidance on how to design, sequence, and deliver instruction that supports student learning. Adopting a schoolwide or systemwide instructional model provides teachers with a common approach for lesson design and delivery and professional vocabulary that make professional learning coaching, and collaboration more focused and efficient. This infographic shares a definition of instructional models, common elements across different types of instructional models, and key steps for school and system leaders to select and implement an instructional model.

[Infographic](#)



## Micronesian Teachers Education Conference (MTEC)

Photo: REL Pacific staff members Erin D'Amelio (pictured) and Bradley Rentz presented on “Developing Culturally Sustaining Instructional Models” at the Micronesian Teachers Education Conference, which took place on July 4–6 in Tafunsak, Kosrae.

## Recent Sessions in the FSM

- Yap, July 12–14 and 17–18: Supporting the Development of a New Culture Curriculum
- Pohnpei, July 10–14: Planning for and Implementing Systemic Change in the Pohnpei Department of Education
- Kosrae, June 26–30: Planning for and Implementing Systemic Change in the Kosrae Department of Education

## Upcoming Coaching Sessions in the FSM

- Pohnpei, September 20–22: Piloting a Culturally Sustaining Instructional Model (Coaching Session 1)
- Pohnpei, November 15–17: Piloting a Culturally Sustaining Instructional Model (Coaching Session 2)

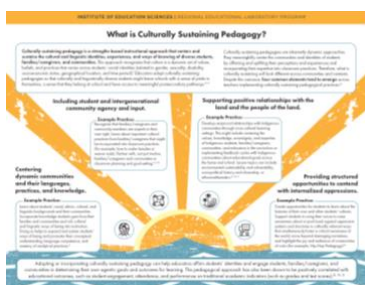
# New Publications on Culture-based Education



## Infographic: ‘Āina-based Education, Place-based Education, and Project-based Learning

Education models designed to provide students with authentic learning opportunities include fostering connections to the place and local culture(s) where the school is located and working on real-world projects that students may encounter outside of classrooms. This infographic developed in partnership with Hawai‘i educators highlights ‘āina-based education, place-based education, and project-based learning—three approaches many local schools are using to accomplish this goal. The infographic showcases each model’s core components and the design principles that drive instruction.

[Infographic](#)



## Infographic: What is Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

This infographic outlines key elements and example practices of culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) to support educators and school/system leaders’ understanding of CSP. Developed in collaboration with the Cross-REL CSP Working Group comprised of representatives from each of the RELs, the infographic includes considerations and examples that are broadly applicable to schools and districts implementing or seeking to implement CSP.

[Infographic](#)

# Where in the World is REL Pacific?

*In addition to our schedule of onsite visits and working sessions across the region, REL Pacific staff attend national and regional conferences to share information about our partnerships and highlight resources created in collaboration with partners.*

## STATS-DC Data Conference in Bethesda, Maryland

REL Pacific presented “Contextualizing Pacific Data Culture: A Community of Practice with REL Pacific” at the 2023 National Center for Education Statistics’ STATS-DC Conference on August 9–11 in Bethesda, Maryland. Two REL Pacific staff members shared information about a community of practice convened with educators in the U.S.-affiliated Pacific jurisdictions on the topic of data use. A second presentation on “Leveraging Early Literacy Data in the CNMI: Insights and Enhancements,” which was led by three CNMI Public School System (PSS) partners—Annette Pladevega-Sablan, Ignacia Demapan, and Paulette Tomokane—who invited REL Pacific staff Erin D’Amelio to join as a co-presenter. This presentation explored PSS’ lessons learned from using an early warning system in reading for elementary schools and the modernization of data processes to develop a robust platform.

### Where's REL Pacific going next?

- **Hawai'i-Pacific Evaluation Association (H-PEA) Conference, September 21–22:** Three REL Pacific staff members will provide a pre-conference virtual workshop presentation called “Building Virtual Communities with Pacific Partners: Lessons Learned from a Community of Practice with Educators from the U.S. Pacific Jurisdictions.”
- **Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment (CREA) Conference, Chicago, Illinois, October 4–6:** Two REL Pacific staff members will facilitate a roundtable session on “Making Evaluation Findings Culturally Relevant, Engaging, and Meaningful.”
- **Fall Governing Board In-person Meeting, Pohnpei, FSM, November 1–2:** REL Pacific staff and REL Pacific Governing Board members from across the region will convene to strengthen the communication networks among governing board members, reflect on the role of regional partnerships and projects to develop culturally sustaining practices, and create meaningful opportunities for board member engagement with REL Pacific.

## News: Introducing the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Partnership to Support Foundational Teaching and Learning

This new partnership—which comprises key leadership from the Ministry of Education (MOE), Public School System (PSS), and College of the Marshall Islands (CMI)—aims to design and plan for the implementation of a culturally relevant and sustaining Marshallese education framework that encourages student engagement and school connectedness, and therefore supports student learning and performance. As part of their efforts to develop a culturally relevant and sustaining education framework that is grounded in Marshallese culture, language, context, and ways of knowing, RMI education leaders are pursuing the long-term goal of developing a systems approach to promoting culturally relevant and sustaining education.

This partnership will take into consideration the recent work of the Region 19 Comprehensive Center and the MOE to [develop and train school staff to use a new teacher and principal evaluation system](#) within a culturally responsive resource infrastructure to support its adoption and sustainability.

## Meet Our Staff



### Dr. Siomara (Sio) Valladares

REL Pacific extends a warm welcome to our **new deputy director, Dr. Siomara (Sio) Valladares**. She joined us in June, coming from the University of Colorado's School of Education, where she developed and sustained high-impact partnerships with local and national organizations and communities. As principal investigator for the Research Hub for Youth Organizing and as faculty co-director for the Center for Community-Based Learning and Research (CU Engage), Dr. Valladares provided fundraising and partnership development, leadership, and strategic planning, as well as training opportunities for doctoral students. Her program of research focuses on community research collaboratives and applied organizational studies. Dr.

Valladares holds an M.A. and a Ph.D. in education from the University of California, Los Angeles.

In her first few months with REL Pacific, Dr. Valladares has already begun to make connections with our colleagues across the region. She experienced the Island Hopper flight route with a visit to Chuuk (FSM) and joined the partnership team for American Samoa.

### **Dr. Dale Lewis**

With Dr. Valladares' arrival, we give our sincere thanks to **Dr. Dale Lewis** for his dedicated service as our interim deputy director over the last year. Dr. Lewis has provided thought leadership and supported REL Pacific staff for several years as they've carried out research, training, coaching, and technical support. He will continue to support REL Pacific's activities to collaborate and coordinate with other U.S. federal technical assistance centers and programs.



### **Dr. Sheila Arens**

**Dr. Sheila Arens returns to the REL Pacific team as our interim applied research lead**, working on peer-reviewed research-based development projects. She has worked in partnership with Pacific region stakeholders to conduct applied research and provide training, coaching, and technical support for more than seven years. Dr. Arens has also served as a principal investigator on multiple studies aimed at understanding the predictors of college success and teacher outcomes in the REL Pacific jurisdictions.

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

# Resources of Note from the U.S. Department of Education

## IES and Accelerating Learning Recovery

A National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) long-term trend report on the math and reading scores of 13-year-old students in the United States confirms just how damaging the COVID-19 pandemic was to student achievement. In a [recent blog](#), IES Director Mark Schneider highlights several avenues IES is pursuing to help speed learning recovery after the pandemic.

## New WWC Evidence Reports on Two Literacy Programs: Reading Recovery and World of Words

The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) recently reviewed Reading Recovery, a supplemental program designed to help grade 1 students improve their literacy skills through one-on-one tutoring and tailored lessons. The [Reading Recovery intervention report](#) provides information about various effects of program implementation and cost. Another new WWC intervention report highlights positive effects on language development from the [World of Words](#) program, a supplementary curriculum that is used to help young children develop vocabulary, concept knowledge, and content knowledge in science.

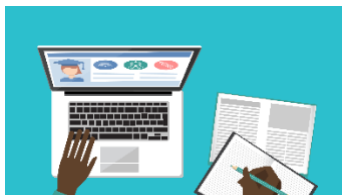
## Leveraging Technology for Student Success

This resource, collaboratively developed by a cross-REL group, focuses on [three critical phases of integrating technology in districts and schools](#). The document is designed to assist district leaders in making informed decisions around the adoption and effective use of technology in their schools.

## Blog from the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE) featuring REL Pacific's Partnership in Palau

This blog highlights how the RELs leverage their distinct capacity for innovation, rigorous research, and authentic partnership to deliver locally focused and evidence-based supports to the regions, states, and communities they serve. Read more about the [REL Program's efforts in making a difference in educator recruitment and retention](#), including the work of the Palau Partnership to Support Teacher Effectiveness.

## REL Pacific Resources



### We're on Twitter!

Follow @RELPacific on Twitter to stay up to date on our current work and exciting events!

[Follow Us](#)



### 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](#)

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