



**REL Southeast**  
Director's Email

October 2023

## Greetings from the REL Southeast,

In a rapidly evolving global landscape, where technological advancements and data-driven decision-making have become the norm, mathematics holds the key to unlocking a world of opportunities for our young learners. Adolescence, as a pivotal stage of development, is characterized by profound physical and cognitive transformations. It is a time when teenagers grapple with questions about their identity, purpose, and future aspirations. Alongside these existential inquiries, adolescents are also engaged in the formidable task of mastering mathematical concepts. For many, this presents a significant challenge, as mathematics often carries the stigma of being difficult or seemingly irrelevant in their day-to-day lives. In an era dominated by smartphones and calculators, some may question the necessity of mastering mathematical concepts that appear distant from immediate, practical application. Mathematics education is far more profound than mere rote memorization of formulas or the routine solving of equations. It is a dynamic process that equips young minds with the essential tools they need to thrive in an ever-evolving world. It serves as a critical life skill that empowers adolescents to think critically, solve complex problems, and make informed decisions. Far from being an abstract and disconnected subject, mathematics is an integral part of everyday life.

This month, REL Southeast would like to encourage educators, administrators, and families to explore resources around these issues from the Institute of Education Sciences. We hope you find these materials informative and useful, and as always, thank you for helping to improve educational outcomes for every student in our region.

With gratitude,

**Dr. Nicole Patton Terry**  
*Director, REL Southeast*

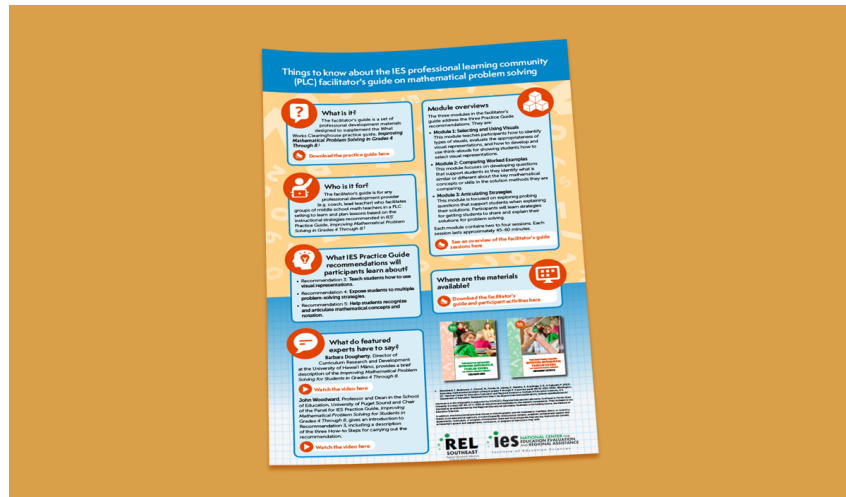


**Professional Learning Community: Improving  
Mathematical Problem Solving for Students in Grades 4**

## through 8

This facilitator's guide, created by [REL Southeast](#), is a set of professional development materials designed to supplement the What Works Clearinghouse practice guide, [Improving Mathematical Problem Solving in Grades 4 Through 8](#). The practice guide provides research-based recommendations for teachers to incorporate into their classroom practice. The facilitator's guide is designed to complement and extend the practice guide by providing teachers in a PLC setting with additional, step-by-step guidance for the best ways to implement some of these evidence-based recommendations.

[Click here to explore the tool.](#)



## Things to Know About the IES Professional Learning Community (PLC) Facilitator's Guide on Mathematical Problem Solving

This infographic, created by [REL Southeast](#), offers essential insights and core elements regarding the IES Professional Learning Community (PLC) Facilitator's Guide on Mathematical Problem Solving.

[Click here to view the infographic.](#)



How to Boost Your Middle Schooler's Math Confidence and Success.

## How to Boost Your Middle Schooler's Math Confidence and Success

As the teen years approach, students enrolled in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) courses might feel frustrated with math, even if they excelled at it when they were younger. This [REL Northwest](#) video offers research-based ways parents can help their child respond to math challenges in positive ways and understand how and why math skills matter.

[Click here to watch the video.](#)



## Strategies to Engage Students and Transform the Middle School Math Experience

Middle school math holds significant importance for students as it introduces key concepts, such as fractions and computational skills, which provide the foundation for advanced math. This blog post by [REL Midwest](#) highlights effective engagement strategies that can help middle school students connect to math content in meaningful ways and build the skills needed for success in more advanced math in high school and college.

[Click here to read the blog.](#)



Math Mindset: Transforming the Middle School Math Experience.

## Math Mindset: Transforming the Middle School Math Experience

Math engagement is a crucial building block for middle school learners to understand key concepts, which can help to prepare students for success in advanced math. [REL Midwest](#) created this 30-minute documentary in collaboration with WTTW – Chicago Public Broadcasting Station to highlight the importance and impact of engaging middle school students in math learning to rebuild fundamental mathematics skills.

[Click here to watch the documentary.](#)

[Click here to download the viewer's guide.](#)



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