



REL Southeast  
Director's Email

April 2022

## Greetings from the REL Southeast,

Welcome to the first newsletter of the 2022-27 Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Southeast! We're excited to work hand-in-hand with stakeholders at every level over the next five years to improve educational outcomes for students across our six-state region. We invite you to learn more about the REL Southeast by exploring the stories below that spotlight our recently formed Governing Board and highlight the priorities and partnerships that will guide our upcoming work. As always, the REL Southeast team looks forward to serving you as we continue the critical work of improving outcomes for all students, and we thank you for joining us in that effort.

With gratitude,

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



Governing Board members, research partners, and staff gather on Florida State University's campus for the first meeting of the 2022-27 REL Southeast.

## Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast at Florida State University announces 2022-27 Governing Board

The REL Southeast is pleased to announce the new slate of Governing Board members for the 2022-27 contract cycle. The Governing Board helps REL Southeast prioritize the education needs of the region, provides strategic guidance on REL work to maximize local effectiveness, and leverages members' regional networks to amplify and disseminate REL products. REL Southeast Governing Board members represent diverse expertise and experience and bring varied and rich perspectives to our work.

The recently named Governing Board members include:

- [Dr. Suzanne Adlof, Associate Professor, University of South Carolina](#)
- [Dr. Gary Bingham, Professor, Georgia State University](#)
- [Wendy Burgess, Team Lead, Office of Early Learning, South Carolina Department of Education](#)
- [Kelly Butler, CEO, Barksdale Reading Institute](#)
- [Dr. Meria Carstarphen, Former Superintendent, Atlanta Public Schools, Georgia](#)
- [Alissa Cheek, Coordinator for New School Program & High School Math Intervention Specialist, Cherokee County Schools, North Carolina](#)
- [Dr. Elisabeth Davis, Assistant State Superintendent of Student Learning, Alabama State Department of Education](#)
- [Dr. Carol Donovan, Professor, University of Alabama](#)
- [Dr. Caitlin Dooley, Deputy Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Georgia Department of Education](#)
- [Dr. Catherine Edmonds, Deputy Superintendent, Office of Educational Equity, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction](#)
- [Dr. Robin Ennis, Associate Professor, University of Alabama at Birmingham](#)
- [Dr. Michelle Gayle, Assistant Superintendent of Professional and Community Services, Leon County Schools, Florida](#)
- [Dr. Iheoma Iruka, Founding Director, Equity Research Action Coalition, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#)
- [Dr. Robin Jarvis, Director, Region 7 Comprehensive Center, RMC Research Corporation](#)
- [Dr. Donzell Lee, Retired Provost & Interim President, Alcorn State University, and National Institutes for Historically Underserved Students](#)
- [Dr. David Mathis, Deputy Superintendent, South Carolina Department of Education](#)
- [Dr. Priscilla Maynor, Co-Director, Region 6 Comprehension Center, SERVE Center, University of North Carolina at Greensboro](#)
- [Cari Miller, Vice Chancellor for Literacy Achievement, Florida Department of Education](#)
- [Blythe Robinson, President and CEO, Sheltering Arms Early Education and Family Centers](#)
- [Dr. Angela Rutherford, Professor, University of Mississippi](#)
- [Catherine Truitt, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction](#)
- [Dr. Monica Verra-Tirado, Chief of Equity and Diversity, Hillsborough County Public Schools, Florida](#)
- [Dr. Caryn Ward, Director, National Implementation Research Network, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#)
- [Dr. Toy Watts, Superintendent, Laurel School District, Mississippi](#)
- [Dr. Carey Wright, State Superintendent of Education, Mississippi Department of Education](#)

The REL Southeast works in partnership with educators and education stakeholders to bridge research, policy, and practice in education. REL work is change-oriented, supporting meaningful local, regional, or state decisions about education policies, programs and practices designed to improve learner outcomes. RELs conduct applied research in partnership with stakeholders to address local and regional needs; provide training, coaching and technical support for applying research to education improvement; and widely disseminate findings from high-quality research. In addition to informing policy and practice through scientific research and large-scale studies, the REL Southeast translates its findings into actionable recommendations for educators.

The REL Southeast is delighted to welcome such a strong group of new board members and looks forward to working with each of them in the coming years.

Learn more at <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/region/southeast>.

## REL Southeast Governing Board meets to discuss new work, partnerships

REL Southeast convened its first Governing Board meeting of the 2022-27 contract cycle on Sunday, March 6 and Monday, March 7. Priorities for the new cycle were discussed, including the relevant and rigorous implementation of research and practice, working in partnership with stakeholders to dive deeper to improve student achievement, and centering equity in how and with whom we do our work.

The two-day event kicked-off with a keynote presentation on implementation science by Dr. Caryn Ward from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Monday, the board was briefed on proposed projects and introduced to the recently formed partnerships that will drive the work of REL Southeast. The partnerships include:

- South Carolina Partnership to Implement Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy
- Mississippi Adolescent Literacy Partnership
- Alabama Research Partnership on Improving English Learner Outcomes
- Florida Panhandle K-3 Literacy Partnership
- Florida Virtual School Partnership
- School Climate and Literacy for Georgia Partnership
- North Carolina Competency-Based Education Partnership
- Diversifying the Teacher Pipeline with Historically Black Colleges and Universities

The Governing Board also discussed plans to create a new educator toolkit during the 2022-27 cycle. The toolkit will be developed around the What Works Clearinghouse practice guide, [Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention \(RTI\) and Multi-Tier Intervention in Primary Grades](#), and will specifically focus on the guide's second recommendation to provide differentiated reading instruction for all students based on assessments of students' current reading levels.

The REL Southeast is looking forward to providing regular updates regarding the work of the partnerships through future blog posts. Visit <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/region/southeast> routinely for more information.

