

## March 2023 Newsletter

REL Southwest partners with educators and policymakers in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas to improve learner outcomes.

### Message from the director:

In December 2022, Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Southwest began a new, five-year contract with an exciting scope of work. Building on our long-standing partnerships in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas, we are collaborating with state education agencies, school districts, and others to identify, develop, and test education interventions that hold promise to improve student outcomes. These partnerships are at the heart of the REL Southwest mission and shared commitment to expand the use of data, research, and evidence to inform education policy and practice in high-leverage, priority areas that impact students.

We have developed partnerships that address some of the greatest needs in our region. Some of our partnership focus areas include early childhood education, adolescent reading instruction, and literacy among English learner students. Other focus areas center on college and career readiness and success, supports for early career teachers, and advising in high school. Together with our partners, we will use evidence-based training, coaching, and technical support to design and test the feasibility and usability of education interventions. Then, we will test the efficacy of the optimized interventions. We will provide support to help states consider how they might scale up interventions statewide if the interventions show promising results.

In the coming months, we will meet with our partner organizations and refine plans for our work. We are also forming a governing board that includes representatives from each of our five states. We will constantly engage with our governing board, including meeting twice each year to ensure we continue to align our work with regional needs. Throughout these conversations, and with the input of our partners, we will remain committed to our shared goal of improving the lives of all students in the Southwest.

We invite you to [browse our revamped website](#) to learn more about our current and past work and to explore resources and research from REL Southwest and the entire REL network. You can also follow us on Twitter [@RELSouthwest](#) for up-to-date news and information about our work and upcoming events. I welcome your input and feedback about our work and how we may help you in our shared mission to serve our states, districts, schools, teachers, students, and families throughout our region. Feel free to reach out to me at [mvaden-kiernan@air.org](mailto:mvaden-kiernan@air.org).

All the best,

**Michael Vaden-Kiernan, PhD**  
Director | REL Southwest  
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## REL Southwest Approach

### Partnerships That Maximize Impact

REL Southwest’s new work will build on our longstanding partnerships with state and regional education agencies in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. Together, we will broaden the work to include local educators to help implement and test research-based education interventions designed to address the region’s most pressing education needs. To maximize our impact on schools, teachers, and students, our focus is on developing and testing local innovations that have promise to improve school and classroom practices at scale.

### Meaningful Collaboration

REL Southwest builds long-term relationships with educators, administrators, policymakers, and researchers in our region. We work side by side with our partners to identify projects based on regional need. Then we collaborate to refine each project’s concept, goals, and implementation strategy. Throughout the cycle of work, we leverage the expertise of our governing board members. This relationship-building process is strengthened by our shared goal of improving student outcomes, respect for partner work, and consistent check-ins with community partners. Community voice is woven throughout our approach in a way that elevates diversity, equity, and inclusion.

### Engagement at Every Stage

In all aspects of our work, we use multiple modes of dissemination and layer them to increase interest and reinforce understanding. We consider whether to develop videos, infographics, events, or other resources or strategies to relate research findings most effectively to our community partners. The REL Southwest website is the primary hub for disseminating our work broadly and will hold our most up-to-date resources. Our website maintains a library of products that can be used to reach different audiences, for example, a video to supplement a training or an infographic to showcase evidence-based practices.

## New REL Southwest Website

In December 2022, REL Southwest officially launched a [new website](#). The updated website allows you to search by topic, state, and product type for easy access to our latest products, publications, events, blog posts, and more. We are excited to help you navigate the new site! Check out all our resources [here](#):



### Contact us

Please contact us for more information about the content in this newsletter or to speak to a member of our staff. We look forward to hearing from you.