

Regional Educational Laboratory Appalachia: Data-Driven Decisionmaking

Client: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Evaluation and Regional Assistance

Overview

The Regional Educational Laboratory–Appalachia (REL-Appalachia) is part of a network of 10 labs across the country designed to conduct and disseminate research to support continuous improvement in student outcomes, help close achievement gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged students, and achieve other key goals of the No Child Left Behind Act. REL-Appalachia sought to identify and meet the educational research needs of state and local education agencies, school districts, and schools in the Appalachian region (Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee), emphasizing long-term, rigorous evaluations of public education programs and short-term research projects investigating and analyzing education policies and practices.

Insight provided research assistance regarding the programs and initiatives within REL-Appalachia. As part of this process, REL-Appalachia helped state departments of education develop ways to provide data their districts needed to inform local practice; respond to the need for data for continuous

improvement; and in particular, aid educators to improve teaching and learning activities. The research helped states in the region understand how districts were trying to use data and how well their capabilities aligned with their objectives.

For this project, Insight—

- Provided research assistance and analysis in the development of materials relevant to the data-driven decisionmaking process throughout the region
- Reviewed and provided analysis of the methodology
- Revised the report based on independent research and analysis of the findings and the process for data collection
- Made recommendations for the product development based on the findings
- Provided independent coding and analysis of the qualitative data—from written transcripts and audio—collected from 17 interviews with state administrators and data managers
- Analyzed the audio to code captured responses not illuminated through the written product, such as intonation, conversation flow, and emotional expression through the discussion
- Analyzed data by research question, topic, and theme

Products

REL-Appalachia internal document submissions (July 2010)

