

Regional Educational Laboratory–Appalachia: Educators Bringing Evidence to Practice Events

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

Project Overview

Insight served as a subcontractor to CNA Corporation to provide research assistance with respect to the programs and initiatives within the Regional Educational Laboratory–Appalachia (REL–Appalachia). The goal of the laboratory is 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). The REL–Appalachia, part of a network of 10 such labs across the country, is designed to conduct and disseminate research that will support continuous improvement in student outcomes, help to close achievement gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged students, and achieve other key goals of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Emphasis was on long-term, rigorous evaluations of public education programs as well as short-term research projects investigating and analyzing education policies and practices.



Insight led the coordination of professional development opportunities for stakeholders across the REL–Appalachia region that were aimed at bringing evidence-based practices to practitioners. These events typically were based on the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Practice Guides. Insight developed these events including the foundational structure; recruitment of speakers, experts, and panelists; materials (including analysis of the presentation plans and crosswalk to the practice guide); coordination with core staff; participant invitations; and all conference logistics.

Educators Bringing Evidence to Practice Events included:

- **Supporting Early Readers: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades.** The objective of this event was to discuss the findings in the National Center for Educational Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE) Practice Guide entitled “Assisting Students Struggling With Reading: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades.” This practice guide presented recommendations to help educators provide assistance to students experiencing reading difficulties.
- **Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools.** The objective of this event was to present information about evidence-based strategies to turn around schools with a history of low performance quickly and effectively.
- **Dropouts in Tennessee and Strategies for Prevention.** The objective of this event was to discuss the findings in the WWC Practice Guide on Dropout Prevention and inform school districts about the work of the WWC and the regional educational laboratories.

Core Activities

Literature Review and Environmental Scan; Qualitative Research; Secondary Data Analysis; Policy Analysis and Assessment; Report Development and Presentation

Products

Insight produced 3 reports for this project:

- “Supporting Early Readers: Response to Intervention and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades” (May 2009)
- “Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools” (November 2009)
- “Dropouts in Tennessee and Strategies for Prevention Report” (January 2010)