

NEWSLETTER

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Letter from the Director



As we head into the 2022/23 school year, our work with our state, Tribal, and local education agency partners continues to pick up speed. In this issue of our newsletter, we're pleased to share a new blog on how we take an equity approach to our work and an introduction to the Partnership on Strengthening Culture-Based Elementary Math Education in Standing Rock.

In addition, we'll introduce you to REL Central's Governing Board and provide some highlights from our recent board meeting and recent visit to Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

As always, we want to hear from you. Email us with questions or ideas about our work at relcentral@mathematica-mpr.com.

Phillip Herman
Director, REL Central

Meet the REL Central Governing Board

In August, REL Central staff members and the new REL Central Governing Board (listed below) met for an engaging and productive three-hour virtual meeting to get to know one another, learn about and affirm the work underway in each of the REL Central region states, and elect a Governing Board chair and vice-chair. Congratulations and a huge thank you to new REL Central Board Chair Dr. Curtis Garcia from Colorado and Vice-Chair Mr. Josh Males from Nebraska!

REL Central Governing Board

Name	Title	Organization	State
Dan Jorgensen	Accountability Support Manager	Colorado Department of Education	CO
Curtis Garcia	Associate Professor & Director	School of Education, Adams State University	CO
Kristina Hesbol	Associate Professor, Doctoral Program Coordinator	Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Department, Morgridge College of Education, University of Denver	CO
Autumn Rivera	Teacher	Glenwood Springs Middle School	CO
Kelly Spurgeon	Education Program Consultant	Kansas State Department of Education	KS
Kelly Bielefeld	Executive Director, College and Career Readiness	Wichita Public Schools	KS
Margie Vandeven	Commissioner	Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education	MO
Leigh Anne Taylor Knight	Executive Director and CEO	DeBruce Foundation	MO
Cory Koedel	Associate Professor of Economics and Public Policy	University of Missouri	MO
Matthew Blomstedt	Commissioner of Education	Nebraska Department of Education	NE
Cory Epler	Academic Officer Office of Teaching, Learning, & Assessment	Nebraska Department of Education	NE
Josh Males	K-12 Curriculum Specialist for Mathematics	Lincoln Public Schools	NE
Laura Barrett	Administrator	Educational Service Unit 13	NE
Kirsten Baesler	State Superintendent	North Dakota Department of Public Instruction	ND
Laurie Matzke	Assistant Superintendent	North Dakota Department of Public Instruction	ND
Lyndsi Engstrom	Director of Research, Design and Value	State Board of Public Schools, and Central Regional Education Association	ND
Matt Bakke	Superintendent	Devils Lake Public Schools	ND
Sunshine Carlow	Finance Manager and Lakota Immersion School Director	Sitting Bull College	ND
Juliana TakenAlive	Education Program Specialist	Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Tribal Department of Education	ND
Tiffany Sanderson	Secretary of Education	South Dakota Department of Education	SD
Morgan VonHaden	Deputy Executive Director	South Dakota Statewide Family Engagement Center; Black Hills Special Services Cooperative	SD
Chad Auer	Deputy State Superintendent of Public Instruction	Wyoming Department of Education	WY
Debra Smith	Superintendent	Ft. Washakie Schools, Fremont County #25	WY
Benjamin Moritz	Deputy Director	Wyoming Community College Commission	WY
Morgan Masson	Pre-Service Teacher	Central Wyoming College	WY

Resource Roundup



[Blog: Approaching REL Central Work Through an Equity Lens](#)

We know that a variety of factors, in and out of schools, influence student achievement, and we know that our education systems consistently serve some students less well than others. But do we know what factors we should focus on to ensure that all students have equitable opportunities to learn and succeed? Check out this blog post by REL Central Director Phillip Herman to learn about how we and our partnerships are thinking through this issue at REL Central.

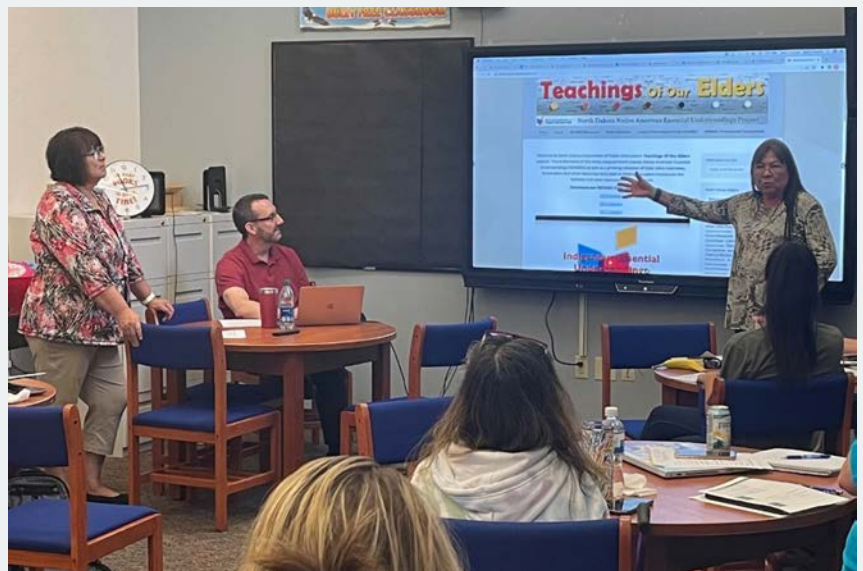
Where in the world is REL Central?

Tanyán yahípi. (Welcome, it is good that you have come).

Our partners at Standing Rock Tribal Education Department and Sitting Bull College believe that many Lakota and Dakota learners may be alienated by the way math is taught in reservation schools. This is because math instruction is currently based on a western model of math teaching and learning that might not be well suited to the needs of many Native American learners. As we begin the partnership work of integrating Lakota and Dakota culture into elementary math instruction on the Standing Rock Reservation, two recent trips to the reservation have begun to bring school-based educators into the partnership. In the first week of August, Doug Van Dine, senior researcher at REL Central, traveled to Standing Rock to connect with this year's cohort of Wawokiya Teachers during their initial orientation. Wawokiya Teachers are experienced teachers or paraprofessionals in the district who strive to implement the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings and Standards (OSEUS) into the classroom, provide OSEUS support at their schools, and facilitate OSEUS and Lakota language and culture projects in their schools.

During the week, Van Dine participated in the orientation alongside the Wawokiya Teachers, learning about the Lakota and Dakota culture and language from presenters such as Dakota Good House and Elliot Bannister, and beginning the work of aligning current curriculum and lesson plans with OSEUS. Van Dine was also able to share about the partnership work to develop culturally infused modules to support math in grades 3–5, which was met with excitement by several of the teachers and paraprofessionals. To further build partnership connections, the following week Van Dine attended a weeklong, virtual class led by Danny Luecke, who is leading the work of the Dakota/Lakota Math Connections project to develop reference pages to support math and language fluency.

Additionally, Phillip Herman, REL Central director, traveled to Standing Rock during the week of August 15. While there, he met with members of the Tribal Council serving on the Health,



REL Central Senior Researcher Doug Van Dine at the Wawokiya Teachers Orientation.

Education, and Wellness Committee, as well as Dr. Laurel Vermillion, Sitting Bull College president, to share about the proposed partnership work. Throughout the week, Herman traveled to each of the larger elementary schools on the reservation, sharing with principals and instructional coaches who all expressed excitement about the partnership and work. Herman's week at Standing Rock culminated with the opportunity to share directly with Standing Rock teachers about the partnership work at the 2022 Professional Development Day.

Pilamayapilo (thank you all) to our partners at Standing Rock Tribal Education Department, Sitting Bull College, the Wawokiya Program and Teachers, and the educators in Standing Rock schools.

[Infographic: Introducing a Partnership for Strengthening Culture-Based Elementary Math Education in Standing Rock](#)

Learn more about the work of the partnership in this new infographic.

Coming Up Next...

Stay tuned for our next newsletter for more news about our work, additional resources, and updates on our partnerships!

Connect with Us



For more frequent updates, please follow us on Twitter [@RELCentral!](#)