



# NEWSLETTER

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## Latest News from the Director



Greetings, reader, and welcome to the relaunch of the [Regional Educational Laboratory \(REL\) Mid-Atlantic](#) for its next five-year cycle! We're grateful to have the opportunity to continue working with you and other education stakeholders across the region. As in the past, the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences—the funder of all 10 Regional Educational Laboratories—has tasked us with serving the research and analytic needs of state and local agencies and other education stakeholders in Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. We do this by conducting applied research studies; providing training, coaching, and technical support to build local research capacity; and disseminating research findings to educators and policymakers across the region.

Over the next five years, REL staff will conduct our work in the context of tightly integrated partnerships with state and local agencies. Each partnership—several of which are described below—will supervise multiple complementary projects that bring research and evidence to bear on a specific challenge identified by the partnering agency. The challenge might be improving teacher observations in Delaware, promoting equitable outcomes in Philadelphia, or promoting social-emotional recovery from the pandemic in Maryland, but regardless of the specific focus, each partnership will encompass a series of projects that ultimately seek to improve student outcomes, enhance educational practices, or drive sustained organizational change in the service of improving student outcomes.

In the sections that follow, you can learn a bit more about our partnerships, as well as a new multi-state community of practice that will work with state agencies to refine and improve measures of school performance. We'll also introduce you to our reconstituted Governing Board of stakeholders from across the region.

**Brian Gill**  
Director, REL Mid-Atlantic

## Meet the REL Mid-Atlantic Governing Board

Our [Governing Board](#) helps REL Mid-Atlantic identify and prioritize education research needs in the region. The board offers strategic guidance, provides input on REL projects, contributes thought leadership, and helps build authentic connections to stakeholders. The board also takes advantage of members' networks to amplify and disseminate REL products. To kick off 2022, we're pleased to share the names and affiliations of the new REL board, representing educators, administrators, and decision makers across the region. The membership of the board, listed here on the [REL Mid-Atlantic](#) website, reflects diverse expertise and experience from the classroom level to the state education agency, and from parent organizations to teacher associations to higher education.

Name	Organization
<b>Delaware</b>	
Laura Desimone	University of Delaware
Mark Holidick	Delaware Department of Education
Stephanie Ingram	Delaware State Education Association
<b>District of Columbia</b>	
Rashida Young	DC Public Charter School Board
Maya Martin Cadogan	DC PAVE (Parents Amplifying Voices in Education)
Christina Grant	Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Donna Johnson	Office of the State Superintendent of Education
<b>Maryland</b>	
Terry Ball	Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals
Chad Muntz	University System of Maryland
Dara Zeehandelaar Shaw	Maryland State Department of Education
Karen Couch	Kent County School District
<b>New Jersey</b>	
Jairo Borja	NJ Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
James Fogarty	A+ Schools
David Kasyan	Brick High School
Diana Pasculli	New Jersey Department of Education
Harry Lee	New Jersey Public Charter Schools Association
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	
Theodore Dwyer	Pittsburgh Public Schools
Tonya Wolford	School District of Philadelphia
Marilyn Pryle	Abington Heights High School
Adam Schott	Pennsylvania Department of Education
Jim Vaughan	Pennsylvania State Education Association

## RELevant Blog Posts



### States: Don't Give Up on Measuring Student Growth for 2022 Accountability!

In a [new blog post](#), Brian Gill describes the challenges facing states that do not have sufficient data on school performance to reinstate robust accountability measures and rules that were in place before the pandemic. For the past two years, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) waived key requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) related to schools' accountability for performance. ED has made it clear not only that state assessments must be administered as usual

this spring, but also that ESSA accountability rules are back in force. Gill provides insights for states that do not have sufficient data on school performance to restore the accountability measures and rules that they had in place before the pandemic. He suggests a path forward for how states without reliable test data from 2021 can still measure growth from 2019 to 2022.

## What's New, What's Next

### A Peek at Forthcoming Partnerships

During the next five years, [REL Mid-Atlantic](#) will partner with educators to help them generate and use evidence to improve learner outcomes. These partnerships will build evidence to refine and implement a teacher observation tool, as well as promote racial equity, support social-emotional learning, increase teacher supply and diversity, and use technology to improve practice and student engagement. Additional partnerships might be launched in the coming months as we identify additional needs across the region. Across the different partnerships, the REL team will co-create training, coaching, and technical support, alongside applied research and dissemination activities, that emphasize building capacity to use data and information to drive change.



### New Community of Practice Focused on Accountability Changes

States across the country face new challenges in measuring student growth and other aspects of school performance. In response, [REL Mid-Atlantic](#) is establishing a community of practice for state education agencies considering changes to their accountability systems, this year or in the longer term. Members will work together with REL staff to develop better approaches for identifying low-performing schools. Learn more about the new community of practice by following REL Mid-Atlantic on Twitter [@RELMidAtlantic](#).

## Webinar



### Measuring Educational Performance for Improvement: A Framework for Diagnostic Use of Data

In [this recorded webinar](#), a panel of experts and stakeholders discuss a new framework for making sense of school performance measures, informed by the REL's collaborative work with state and local agencies. The panel weighs in on new measures to examine student achievement growth in grades K–3, school climate, social-emotional learning, and the impact high schools have on postsecondary outcomes—all among a range of measures that might be used purely for informational purposes or as part of a formal accountability system in accordance with ESSA.

Moderated by **Carolyn Phenicie** of the Council of Chief State School Officers, the panel also included:

- **Brian Gill**, Director, REL Mid-Atlantic
- **Donna Johnson**, DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education
- **Evan Kramer**, DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education
- **Gene Pinkard**, Education and Society Program, The Aspen Institute

## Connect with Us



For more frequent updates from us and our nine REL partners across the country and to receive the latest research updates from the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, please follow us on Twitter [@RELMidAtlantic!](#)