



## REL Pacific Newsletter

June 2022, vol. 2



### Letter From the Director

Dear Colleagues,

Now that we're fully immersed in the new REL Pacific cycle, we'd like to share some of the initial work that we have launched. We've begun work on two new partnerships: one with Hawai'i called the Hui (Partnership) for All to Benefit from Hawaiian Education, and the other with the Republic of Palau called the Palau Partnership to Support Teacher Effectiveness. We're also excited to have work proposed and coming soon with partnerships in the five other jurisdictions.

The Hui (Partnership) for All will use a networked improvement community, commonly known as a NIC, to bring together educators, researchers, and other stakeholders to collaboratively learn about, discuss, and propose approaches for solutions to common issues and problems of practice. The NIC approach is something others across the region might be interested in as well. If you'd like to learn more about what NICs are and how they operate, please take a look at the two blog posts that are mentioned in this newsletter. And stay tuned later this summer for a REL Pacific webinar that will further explore NIC implementation.

In this newsletter, we'd like to continue introducing you to some of the REL Pacific staff, specifically our partnership lead contacts for Hawai'i, Palau, and Guam. Each partnership lead is happy to answer any questions you may have about the partnership plans for each respective jurisdiction.

As always, please don't hesitate to reach out with questions, concerns, or requests for assistance at [relpacific@mcrel.org](mailto:relpacific@mcrel.org).

Best regards,

Christina Tydeman  
REL Pacific Director

## About REL Pacific

**About REL Pacific** | IES Institute of Education Sciences

**Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Pacific**

REL Pacific is one of 10 Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) funded by the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education. The RELs work collaboratively with school districts, state education agencies, colleges and universities, and other education stakeholders in their regions to help promote the use of evidence-based policies and practices to improve student learning.

**Who We Serve: The Pacific Region**

REL Pacific partners with educators and policymakers in American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Guam, Hawai'i, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), the Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI). Our work is rigorous, change-oriented, and high-leverage, supporting local and regional priorities and decisions about education.

**How We Help**

Our partnerships with key stakeholders aim to develop and apply evidence that can help educators, school and system leaders, and policymakers achieve significant long-term improvements in organizational effectiveness, educator practice, and student outcomes. We provide evidence-based training, coaching, and capacity building services to educators and school leaders throughout the region, and we also support families and community organizations who want to improve education policy and practice.

**Regional Partnership Projects**

REL Pacific partnerships focus on projects such as place-based education, college and career readiness, data use and literacy, and teacher effectiveness, development, and retention. These partnerships offer significant opportunities to create meaningful changes in teacher practice and student outcomes, while developing evidence-based research and data, useful tools, and practical strategies that address common high-leverage needs across the Pacific Islands and other regions.

- Place-Based Education
- College and Career Readiness
- Data Use and Literacy
- Teacher Effectiveness

Learn more about our region and the work we do, including descriptions of our partnerships and projects, in this brochure which is downloadable from the REL Pacific website.

[Check it out here!](#)

## New on the REL Pacific Blog



### Networked Improvement Communities

Networked improvement communities, or NICs, are scientific learning communities in which researchers, practitioners, and other interested partners collaborate to address a common problem of practice. Learn how NICs are structured in this new blog series.

[Click Here to Read More](#)



In the second blog post of this series, we explore the components of building a strong and sustainable NIC, including the important step of establishing a theory of practice improvement.

[Click Here to Read More](#)

# New REL Pacific Partnerships



## Hawai'i

The Hui (Partnership) for All to Benefit from Hawaiian Education with the Hawai'i Public Charter School Network aims to build and sustain a Hawaiian networked improvement community (NIC) focused on place-based education (PBE). Current approaches to PBE reflect the organic, community-based, and innovative nature of PBE and widely vary across schools. As a type of research–practice partnership, the NIC is committed to using improvement science to develop a common PBE framework that supports best practices and encourages consistent, innovative approaches to teaching and learning in PBE settings.



## Palau

The Palau Partnership to Support Teacher Effectiveness with the Palau Ministry of Education and Palau Community College pursues a systems approach to developing

and evaluating teacher effectiveness to support teacher development and retention to improve student outcomes. They envision a teacher effectiveness evaluation system that distinguishes between skilled, novice, and developing teachers and provides meaningful data to inform pre-service teacher preparation and development of teachers at all stages of their careers.

## Meet Our Staff!

Each quarter, we'll introduce you to several REL Pacific staff members, all of whom are committed to supporting and serving you as tackle your problems of practice. Meet some of our applied research; partnership; dissemination; and training, coaching, and technical support leads below!



### **Mr. Ben Cronkright**

is the Hawai'i partnership lead. For six years, he has led regional strategic planning processes through root cause and analysis to support improved effectiveness and student learning outcomes throughout Hawai'i, Guam, the Republic of Palau, and Republic of the Marshall Islands. Ben is the former federal programs manager/academic officer for the Hawai'i Department of Education's Hawai'i State Charter School Commission, where he guided instructional leadership coaching activities to support continuous improvement cycles within a portfolio of low-performing public charter schools across the state.

### **Dr. Sinton Soalablai**

is the partnership lead for the Republic of Palau. Sinton previously served two successful four-year terms as the Minister of Education in Palau, during which he and his team increased the Ministry of Education's reliance on data-driven decisions and evidence-based practices, encouraged consistent use of standards-based lesson planning across the nation's public schools, strengthened teacher certification requirements, and, with assistance from REL Pacific, redesigned the nation's professional learning and teacher induction programs.





## Dr. Kent Davis

is the Guam partnership lead. Kent is a former school district leader, serving as a principal and assistant superintendent for more than 20 years, and he now helps districts across the United States and Pacific region implement strategic plans for improvement and develop teachers' and leaders' knowledge, skills, and abilities. Over the past decade, Kent has worked with educators, principals, and system leaders in the Federated States of Micronesia, Hawai'i, and Guam.

## Dr. Mark Yu

supports partnerships with both Hawai'i and Guam. He has more than eight years of experience working with service programs and research–practice partnerships for diverse youth and families in California, Guam, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Mark has conducted and disseminated research examining teacher effectiveness, including work on promoting positive teacher–student relationships and culturally responsive STEM teaching and learning.



*Keep an eye out for our next newsletter to meet more of our staff!*

## REL Pacific Resources



### COVID Resources

Check out the RELs' COVID resource page for updated information and resources for educators and families.

[See More](#)



### Products

Check out REL Pacific's products page on the new IES website! Click to see our research studies, blogs, and infographics!

[Read More](#)



### Research Tools

Looking for relevant, actionable research tools? Click the link below for a variety of resources across 24 topic areas!

[Explore More](#)

## We're on Twitter!

Follow @RELPacific on Twitter to stay up to date on our current work and exciting events!

Follow Us



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@RELPacific



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