

Experimental Research Studies

Published Reports (Available at <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>)

Effects of Problem Based Economics on High School Economics Instruction

REL West researchers implemented a randomized controlled trial of Problem Based Economics, a high school curriculum designed to increase class participation and content knowledge, especially among students in low-performing schools.

Accommodations for English Language Learner Students: The Effect of Linguistic Modification of Math Test Item Sets

REL West researchers investigated the effects of assessment accommodations on standardized test scores and test score validity for English language learner students. Specifically, they examined the effects of modifying test items to make math content more accessible to students during test administration.

Studies Underway

Quality Teaching for English Learners

WestEd’s Quality Teaching for English Learners teaches secondary school teachers how to provide challenging tasks and scaffold student learning to advance development of academic language. REL West researchers are conducting an experimental study of this WestEd project in several urban school districts serving large numbers of English learners.

Program for Infant/Toddler Care

WestEd’s Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) is a professional development strategy intended to improve the quality of child care programs and the cognitive, language, and social development of participating infants and toddlers. REL West researchers are studying the effectiveness of PITC in the region to build the connection between infant/toddler care and school readiness, consistent with the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

Understanding Science and the Academic Literacy of English Learners

REL West researchers are testing the effectiveness of WestEd’s Understanding Science model, a professional development approach that incorporates science content, analysis of student thinking, and discussion of issues related to teaching that content to English language learner students.

Lessons in Character Program

REL West researchers are examining the impact of the Lessons in Character Program — an English language arts-based character education program — on student academic performance, attendance, school motivation, and endorsement of universal values consistent with character education.

Experimental Research Studies

Study	General Content	EL	Rural	Urban	Teacher Quality
High School Economics Instruction	High school social studies		X	X	X
Assessment Accommodations	Accountability systems	X	X	X	
Quality Teaching for English Learners	EL/middle/high school	X		X	X
Understanding Science and the Academic Literacy of English Learners	Middle school science	X	X	X	X
Program for Infant/Toddler Care	Early childhood	X	X	X	X
Lessons in Character	Character education & English language arts		X	X	X

Read more about these studies at http://relwest.WestEd.org/research_reports

Fast Response Studies

Published Reports (Available at <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>)

A Multistate Review of Professional Teaching Standards (and 2010 update with revised CA standards)

Intended to inform California's revision of its own teaching standards, this review of teaching standards in six states — California, Florida, Illinois, North Carolina, Ohio, and Texas — focuses on the structure, target audience, and selected content of the standards. Supplemental materials, *Teaching Standards: Profiles for Six States* and *Profiles of Key National Teaching Standards*, are available on WestEd's website.

Achievement Gap Patterns of Grade 8 American Indian and Alaska Native Students in Reading and Mathematics

Focusing on student proficiency in reading and math from 2003/04 to 2006/07, this report compares gaps in performance on state achievement tests between grade 8 American Indian and Alaska Native students and all other grade 8 students in 26 states serving large populations of American Indian and Alaska Native students.

Achievement Trends for Schools in Arizona's Title I School Improvement Program

This study documents trends in student achievement, with a focus on low-performing schools, describing the distribution of schools in program improvement according to school features such as Title I status, grades served and size, and how these distributions have changed over time.

An Analysis of Utah's K–3 Reading Improvement Program

This study finds that more districts and charter schools in Utah implemented more key elements of the state literacy framework and met their own goals in Year 2 of the program.

Characteristics of Arizona School Districts in Improvement Characteristics of California School Districts in Program Improvement (and 2008 update)

These descriptive analyses provide statistical profiles of the states' districts in improvement. They inform the context for district improvement as the states roll out and refine their district intervention strategies. They find that the district-level accountability systems identify problems missed at the school level.

Course-Taking Patterns and Preparation for Postsecondary Education in California's Public University Systems Among Minority Youth

This report finds that the high school program for college preparation begins in 9th grade and that making up missed preparatory courses and academic content is likely to be difficult for students who put off college preparatory work until later in their high school career.

Do Schools in Rural and Nonrural Districts Allocate Resources Differently? An Analysis of Spending and Staffing Patterns in the West Region States

This study examines patterns of spending, staffing, and resources available to rural school districts in the period 2000–2006, compared to their urban/suburban counterparts in the West Region.

Examining Independent Study High Schools in California

The number of high school students enrolled in full-time independent study in California has grown over the last decade, with over 100,000 students in 2009. This study analyzed several datasets to examine the number, accessibility, nature, performance, and student and teacher populations for these educational options.

Examining the Links Between Grade 12 Mathematics Coursework and Mathematics Remediation in Nevada Public Colleges and Universities

This study examines the links between Nevada's grade 12 math courses and remedial math courses in Nevada's public colleges and universities. It analyzes remediation rates by student's highest grade 12 math course levels and math grade point average and by various student and school characteristics.

Implementation of the Weighted Student Formula Policy in San Francisco: A Descriptive Study of an Equity-Driven, Student-Based Planning and Budgeting Policy

This report describes the planning and implementation of San Francisco's weighted student formula policy, an equity-driven, student-based planning and budgeting policy. It examines the district's policy goals, planning and implementation considerations, and how the policy interacted with other local, state, and federal policies.

Published Reports (continued)

Measuring Resilience and Youth Development: The Psychometric Properties of the Healthy Kids Survey

REL West studied the psychometric properties of the resilience and youth development module, a key component of the Healthy Kids Survey.

Patterns of Student Mobility Among English Language Learner Students in Arizona Public Schools

Using a five-year longitudinal student-level dataset, this study tracks student enrollment and transfers into and out of all public schools in Arizona. Its focus is on the state's large population of English language learner students and their movement among public schools.

Projecting the Need for California School Administrators over 2010/11-2017/18: The Effects of Projected Retirement and Projected Changes in Student Enrollment Over Two-Year Increments

The Association of California School Administrators and the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association requested an analysis of projected needs for school-site administrators over two-year periods, in addition to the ten-year period currently reflected in the *School-site administrators: a California county and regional perspective on labor market trends* report published by REL West.

Reenrollment of High School Dropouts in a Large, Urban School District

This study follows a cohort of first-time 9th graders in one large urban school district from 2001/02 to 2005/06 and documents their dropout, reenrollment, and graduation rates. For the one-third of dropouts who reenrolled in the district over that period, it reports course credit accrual and graduation outcomes as well as students' reasons for dropping out and the challenges districts face with their reenrollment.

School-Site Administrators: A California County and Regional Perspective on Labor Market Trends

This study describes the differences among California's counties and regions in their respective needs for new school-site administrators in the coming decade, as driven by a combination of projected student enrollment changes and projected administrator retirements.

The Distribution of Teaching and Learning Resources in California's Middle and High Schools

Data examined for this study revealed that access to important educational resources in California's middle and high schools is not equal among schools that serve different student populations, with the most disadvantaged likely to have the least access to the resources necessary for learning.

The Relationship Between English Proficiency and Content Knowledge for English Language Learner Students in Grades 10 and 11 in Utah

This study examines the performance of secondary students on the Utah Academic Language Proficiency Assessment in relation to their performance on the state's criterion-referenced content assessment in English language arts and mathematics. It also compares ELL students' performance on the content assessments to that of other students.

The Status of State-Level Response to Intervention Policies and Procedures in the West Region States and Five Other States

This study is an in-depth examination of state-level implementation of response to intervention strategies in Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah. These findings were supplemented with background information from the field, including descriptions of implementation in five other comparable states.

Training Early Intervention Assistants in California's Community Colleges

This report details how a pilot group of community colleges in California are preparing early intervention specialists by integrating early intervention competencies as part of an AA degree in Child Development and summarizes ways that other states are preparing and certifying early intervention specialists.

Trends in California Teacher Demand: A County and Regional Perspective

This report highlights the differences among California's counties and regions in their use of underprepared teachers and their needs for new teachers in the coming decade as driven by projected student enrollment changes and teacher retirements. The findings show county and regional variations in key factors that influence teacher labor markets.

Where Do English Language Learner Students Go to School? Student Distribution by Language Proficiency in Arizona

This study focuses on how the number and percentage of English learner students vary across schools in Arizona with breakdowns by school level, school type, school location, and the percent of students in the school who are eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch.

Studies Underway

An Examination of Retirement Rate Patterns Among California Educators Since 1995

This study will examine California State Teachers' Retirement System data from 1995 to 2010 for how retirement rates have fluctuated during this period. It will also examine how retirement decisions correlate with unemployment rates and with the amount of per-pupil state and local revenues that a district receives.

How California's Local Education Agencies Evaluate Teachers and Principals

One of the requirements of the 2009 State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) program was that states collect data from all local education agencies (LEAs) on their current teacher and principal evaluation practices. In response to this requirement, California's Department of Education created a survey that was sent to all LEAs during summer 2010. This report provides a summary of survey results.

Patterns of Progress of English Language Learner Students in English Proficiency and English Language Arts: A Longitudinal Analysis

This study examines a cohort of approximately 600 students in California's Lennox School District who, as Kindergarten students in school year 2002/03, were designated as English language learners, following all members of the cohort who remained in the Lennox schools through 2009/10.

Student Academic Performance in Arizona by Ethnic and Accountability Subgroups

Leaders in the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) requested assistance in documenting trends in school achievement, with a focus on low-performing schools. School improvement teams can use this analysis, together with ADE's knowledge of schools and school characteristics, to drive a more complete understanding of school performance.

Events to Bridge Research, Policy, and Practice

Upcoming Events

Dropout Prevention: Next Steps for Utah

November 14, 2011, in Salt Lake City, UT

This event aims to strengthen and accelerate Utah's efforts to reduce student dropout and increase graduation rates by providing an opportunity to learn from experts, and plan policy and practice prevention strategies based on research.

Past Events

Using Data to Improve Student Achievement: Moving Forward in Nevada

October 5, 2011, in Las Vegas, NV

The main goal of this event was to extend and deepen participants' understanding and use of data to improve achievement outcomes for Nevada students.

Considerations for Evaluating Southwest State Educator Evaluation Systems

August 17, 2011, in South Lake Tahoe, NV

This event focused on the evaluation of a state's system for evaluating educators, including how to develop and measure short- and long-term goals, and effective collection and use of formative and summative data.

Southwest Collaborative on Educator Effectiveness: Data Management

August 17, 2011, in South Lake Tahoe, NV

This event focused on data management at the state and local levels, including effective methods to ensure data integrity and transparency.

Postsecondary Access and the Goals of Improving Middle Grades Math Performance

May 23, 2011, in San Jose, CA

At this event participants learned about and discussed the latest research related to preparation for and access to postsecondary education and the related issue of course placement in middle and high school.

Sorting Through the Research and Being Practical: Navigating from 9th Grade to College

May 20, 2011, in Chula Vista, CA

Key stakeholders, including the mayor, discussed the research on postsecondary access and success, how to apply the findings to help strengthen postsecondary access for Chula Vista students, and next steps to achieve the community's goal of having more of their students attend college.

State Support for Postsecondary Access and Success in the Southwest Region

March 28 and 29, 2011, in San Francisco, CA

This event was intended to strengthen the state education agency role in, and mechanisms for, increasing student access to and success in postsecondary education in the Southwest Region.

Past Events (continued)

WEBINAR SERIES: Serving English Language Learner Students in a Rural Context

March 2, 9, & 16, 2011

This series of three webinars provided a national audience of education stakeholders with research-based information on better serving ELL students in rural areas.

WEBINAR: Student Mobility in the Central and West Regions

March 8, 2011

Participants heard from the lead researchers of student mobility studies from the regions and a panel of practitioners from local and state education agencies about challenges of student mobility and some ways to address those challenges.

WEBINAR: Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools: How ESAs Can Help Low-Performing Schools and Districts

February 24, 2011

This webinar focused on ways that education service agencies (ESAs) can support schools' and districts' turnaround efforts.

Pathways to College: Next Steps for Utah

January 10, 2011, in Salt Lake City, UT

This event brought together the state's K-16 education leaders to strengthen and accelerate efforts to increase college readiness, access, and success for all Utah students.

WEBINAR: Effects of Problem Based Economics on High School Economics Instruction

December 8, 2010, February 10, 2011

Participants from REL West's experimental study, *Effects of Problem Based Economics on High School Economics Instruction*, discussed the study findings and implications for classroom use of the Problem Based Economics curriculum.

WEBINAR: Postsecondary Access and Success for Rural Students

November 10, 2010

This webinar featured research on increasing students' access to higher education, with particular emphasis on the implications of this research for rural communities.

Building Foundations for Algebra

October 18, 2010, in San Jose, CA

At this event county office professional developers, researchers, and California Department of Education staff discussed building interventions early so that all California students will be prepared to master algebra.

Leading Successful School Turnarounds

September 30 and October 1, 2010, in Los Angeles, CA

This event was for district and school leaders receiving School Improvement Grants, as well as for state education agency staff, union representatives, and external providers in Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah.

Setting the Stage for Supporting Effective Teaching: Learning from Research and Practice

June 28 and 29, 2010, in Los Angeles, CA

Key stakeholders in the Los Angeles Unified School District community learned about current research and applied it to the district's efforts to revamp teacher evaluation and support as part of a major restructuring of personnel practices.

Pathways to College: Increasing Access to Postsecondary Education for All Canyons School District Students

May 5, 2010, in Sandy, UT

At this event, district and school leaders, school/community site council leaders, and key community leaders learned about current research and applied it to the district's ongoing efforts to improve its students' postsecondary outcomes.

Improving Graduation Rates and College Access in the Southwestern Region

April 8 and 9, 2010, in Phoenix, AZ

State education agency teams from Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah met to apply current research and resources to their ongoing efforts to improve graduation and postsecondary outcomes for high school students.

Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices

December 3 and 4, 2009, in California

This event featured a plenary session at the Secondary Literacy Summit and a session for California Department of Education staff who deal with literacy and school improvement issues.

Pathways to College: Next Steps for Nevada

November 12, 2009, in Las Vegas, NV

This event for Nevada education leaders launched Nevada's initiative to develop statewide college and workforce readiness standards.

Measuring Teacher Effectiveness: Implications for California's Race to the Top

October 6, 2009, in Sacramento, CA

This event targeted the 35 members of California's Race to the Top working group, allowing them to explore the research behind various methods of evaluating teacher effectiveness.

Turning Around Low-Performing Schools Events

Spring and Summer 2009

These seven events focused on turning around low-performing schools in Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah. Participants discussed how to apply evidence-based practices in their own contexts.

Fast Response Publications

Title	Expected release
Measuring resilience and youth development: the psychometric properties of the Healthy Kids Survey	Published
Course-taking patterns and preparation for postsecondary education in California's public university systems among minority youth	Published
An analysis of Utah's K-3 Reading Improvement Program	Published
The distribution of teaching and learning resources in California's middle and high schools	Published
Trends in California teacher demand: a county and regional perspective	Published
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Projecting the need for California school administrators over 2010/11-2017/18	Published
Achievement trends for schools in Arizona's Title I School Improvement Program	Published
Student academic performance in Arizona by ethnic and accountability subgroups	Summer 2011
An examination of retirement rate patterns among California educators since 1995	Fall 2011
Patterns of progress of English language learner students in English proficiency and English language arts	Fall 2011



In carrying out its work, REL West profits from the experience of its parent organization, WestEd, a nonprofit research and development agency, working locally, nationally, and internationally, that has operated a regional educational laboratory since its inception in 1966.