



REL WEST research digest
Spring 2011

Projected Need for Principals Varies Widely across California

Effective school-site administrators play a key role in student achievement. Over the next decade, as baby boomer principals and assistant principals retire and student enrollment increases, California will be challenged to recruit a sufficient number of well-qualified administrators to lead its schools.

While there is no shortage nationally of candidates earning administrative credentials, it can be difficult to attract highly qualified administrators to the schools that most need them — for example, those with high concentrations of students living in poverty or English language learner students, or those located in rural areas. Schools designated as in need of improvement also benefit from strong leadership, and in 2008/2009 more than a quarter of California schools fell into this category as a result of repeatedly failing to meet student achievement goals set by the No Child Left Behind Act.

To provide state education leaders and policymakers with labor market data to address this important issue — on which there have been few comprehensive studies — the Regional Educational Laboratory West (REL West) at WestEd prepared two reports. The first, *School-Site Administrators: A California County and Regional Perspective on Labor Market Trends*, was published by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education in 2010.

Analyses were performed on five-year historic data on administrative retirements from the

California State Teachers Retirement System (CalSTRS) and the California Department of Education Professional Assignment Information Form (PAIF); and both historic and projected student enrollment data from the California Department of Finance 2008 Enrollment Series. Projected increase in demand for school administrators between 2008 and 2018 was calculated by region and county.

After reviewing the first report, state education agencies, including the Association of California School Administrators and the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association, requested that REL West break the projected demand for school administrators into four two-year increments so that data could be used to plan for new administrator training and support in coming years. In response, REL West extended data analysis of the previous report to prepare a technical brief, *Projecting the Need for California School Administrators Over 2010/11–2017/18*, published in March of 2011.

Findings

Statewide, based on combined projections of administrator retirement and changes in

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REL West Research Digest keeps educators and others abreast of the research carried out by the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) West at WestEd. In addition to providing abstracts of selected REL West research reports, this twice-yearly digest may include descriptions of upcoming REL West work, services, and events, and, as relevant to the Western region, of publications developed by other researchers.

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Do rural districts spend differently?

How are Utah ELL students faring?

student enrollment, increased demand for administrators in California for each two-year period, relative to the 2007/2008 baseline, is expected to grow from 6.3 percent in 2010/2011–2011/2012 to 7.5 percent in 2016/2017–2017/2018. The Bay Area region, including the San Francisco, Oakland, and San Jose metropolitan areas, is the only region where demand will decline over the eight years, from 7.2 percent to 6.4 percent.

Among the 11 California regions defined for the studies, increased demand for principals and assistant principals over the next eight years varies between 17.4 percent and 42.3 percent, compared to 2007/2008 workforce levels.

The South Coast region, which includes the Los Angeles and San Diego metropolitan areas, was projected to have the smallest increase in demand for new school administrators over the eight years, at 17.4 percent. Based on retirement rates alone, the region could have expected a 19 percent increase in administrator demand. However,

a projected decline in student enrollment of more than 5 percent reduces that estimate.

Conversely, the Inland Empire region (San Bernardino and Riverside Counties), which borders the South Coast region on the east, is projected to have the highest percentage increase in school administrator demand over the eight years, at just over 42 percent. While the region was projected to have the lowest increase in administrator needs based solely on retirements (19 percent), anticipated growth in student enrollment of 23.3 percent — by far the highest in the state — drove the higher projected increase in demand.

For more details, download free copies of the reports:

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

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

Improved College Access the Goal for Utah Education Leaders, REL West, Southwest Comprehensive Center

To strengthen and accelerate efforts to increase college readiness, access, and success for all Utah students, REL West and the Southwest Comprehensive Center at WestEd, in partnership with the offices of the Utah Governor, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Commissioner of Higher Education, hosted an event on January 10, 2011, in Salt Lake City that brought together the state's K–16 education leaders.

Some 150 invited participants heard a keynote address by William Tierney, Professor of Higher Education and Director of the Center for Higher Education Policy at the University of Southern California, who presented the research-based recommendations in ***Helping Students Navigate the Path to College: What High Schools Can Do***, a Practice Guide published by the Institute of Education Sciences at the U.S. Department of Education. Pamela Perlich, Senior Research Economist in the Bureau of Economic and Business Research, and Professor of Urban Planning at the University of Utah, presented

current demographic, education, and economic data, as they relate to the recommended practices.

To frame discussion on policy issues, three recent reports on recommendations to improve college access and success in Utah were

presented by a panel that included Superintendent of Public Instruction Larry Shumway, Commissioner of Higher Education William Sederburg, and Mark Bouchard, Senior Managing Director of CB Richard Ellis Salt Lake City, who represented Governor Gary Herbert's Education Excellence Commission.

Get further details and resources, including text of each of the three reports.

Visit the
REL West
website featuring:

- Research on improving student outcomes
- Free reports on state issues
- Events that connect research, policy, and practice

Selected Fast-Response and Technical Assistance Project Reports

In carrying out fast-response projects intended to inform quick action and policy decisions, and in providing technical assistance on regional evaluation and research activities, REL West researchers analyze or otherwise utilize existing data, studies, and research reviews. Results undergo external peer review to ensure that they meet the Institute of Education Sciences standards for scientifically valid research. The reports described below have been published since the previous issue of the Research Digest, Winter 2011. Published REL West reports are available at <http://relwest.WestEd.org>. Reports from all 10 RELs are available at the national REL website at <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/index.asp>

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

This study examines the relationship between performance on Utah's English proficiency assessment and English language arts and mathematics content assessments by English language learner (ELL) students and compares the performance of ELL and non-ELL students on the content assessments.

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

Among other key findings, this study showed that districts in rural locales spent more per student, hired more staff (especially teachers) per 100 students, and spent more on overhead than did districts in nonrural areas.

Publications from Other Organizations

The Center for Instruction

Conversations with Practitioners: Supporting State-level Collaboration among General and Special Educators

Collaboration of general and special educators is explored as one way state departments of education and their regional comprehensive centers are supporting a Response to Intervention framework. (Part of a series) (February 2011)

Archived Webinars Offer Updates on Education Issues

REL West's free archived webinars are a quick, convenient way to sharpen your knowledge about important education issues, by listening to presentations by top researchers and seasoned practitioners. Topics range from classroom practices, to district reform, to state-level policies and initiatives. Links to free related materials are also included.

Recent webinars include:

3-Part Series: Serving English Language Learner Students in a Rural Context

This series of national webinars covers the particular needs of English language learner students in rural locales; how to apply research-based practices related to rural ELL students at the classroom level; and building capacity to serve rural ELL students through professional development and consortia building. (March 2011)

Student Mobility in the Central and West Regions

Researchers from the Central and West Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) and a panel of state and local education administrators discussed with participants the implications of high student mobility for students and educators, patterns of mobility among groups of students, and differences in mobility in rural and nonrural regions. (March 2011)

[View all archived webinars.](#)

REL Southeast

Measuring Student Engagement in Upper Elementary through High School: A Description of 21 Instruments

This report reviews the characteristics of 21 instruments that measure student engagement in upper elementary through high school. It summarizes what each instrument measures, describes its purposes and uses, and provides technical information on its psychometric properties. (January 2011)

ASK • A • REL

Ask A REL is a collaborative reference desk service provided by the 10 regional educational laboratories. Functioning much like a technical reference library, it answers education-related questions by providing referrals to IES research projects, publications, and reports; references for and bibliographies of existing education research; referrals to federally funded education organizations and websites; and regionally specific educational information. To **Ask A REL**, go to <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/askarel> and click on your state.

Regional SIG Conference Explores “Revamped” Turnaround Strategies

More than 250 participants from state education agencies, local education agencies, and schools implementing School Improvement Grants (SIGs) attended the *Leading Successful School Turnarounds: Learning from Research and Practice* conference, April 4th and 5th in Los Angeles. Participants, representing nine states, heard from keynote speakers Lauren Morando Rhim, a consultant to the Center on Innovation and Improvement, who spoke on “Leveraging SIG Dollars to Drive Dramatic Improvement: Lessons Emerging from the Field,” and Debra Pickering, Senior Scholar at the Marzano Research Laboratory, who discussed “Effective Teaching/Effective Learning.”

In her remarks on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education, Thelma Meléndez de Santa Ana, Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, noted that: “In the past, when given an option to implement major reforms, the vast majority of districts and schools chose ‘other,’ or ‘none of the above.’ And among those schools that did take some hesitant steps down the road toward ‘improvement’ or ‘restructuring,’ many never

completed the journey. With the newly revamped SIG program, we’re making it clear that it’s time for bold reforms, not timid tinkering. Our children can’t wait.”

One of four such events scheduled during April and May in Western, Eastern, Midwest, and Central regions of the country, the conference program was planned and implemented by the California, Northwest, Pacific, and Southwest Comprehensive Centers in collaboration with the five national content centers and the U.S. Department of Education.

In addition to breakout sessions addressing state, local, and classroom-level school turnaround issues, state department of education staff, rural and urban district staff, school administrators, and other groups met in role-alike groups to address common challenges and strategies. State team meetings gave participants the opportunity for cross-role networking on turnaround issues.

For further information on the SIG Regional Conferences, go to: <http://www.ed.gov/oese-news/sig-regional-conferences-%E2%80%93-save-date>

CONTACT INFORMATION

REL West at WestEd
730 Harrison Street
San Francisco, CA 94107
866.853.1831
relwest@WestEd.org
relwest.WestEd.org

This digest was prepared under Contract ED-06-CO-0014, from the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, by the Regional Educational Laboratory West, administered by WestEd. The content of the publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.