

Teaching and Learning Links

Office of Instructional Promising Practices Division of Standards and Learning

From the Director's Desk

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Change continues in the Division of Standards and Learning where the Office of Instructional Promising Practices is located. Rick Blanchard has moved to the Office of Academic Standards and will continue to coordinate the implementation of the state's Gifted and Talented Education programs. In addition, Ed Falco is no longer in this office, but he continues to work with Environmental Education and can be reached at efalco@ed.sc.gov. We have expanded our literacy initiatives—SC Reading First and the SC Reading Initiative—to include media literacy, which encompasses school library media programs. Martha Alewine continues as the state consultant for school library media services.

We at the SCDE are working diligently to find new ways of providing services, support, and professional development to all schools and districts during these tight budget times. Albert Camus, in his last published lecture entitled *Create Dangerously*, said, "Every wall is a door," Emerson correctly said. Let us not look for the door, and the way out, anywhere but in the wall against which we are living. Instead, let us seek respite where it is—in the very thick of the battle." We will continue to work for you and with you as these tough economic times test our resolve and our creativity in finding ways of engaging, instructing, and preparing South Carolina's children to be productive citizens of the twenty-first century.

We encourage you to contact us at any time with questions and suggestions for how we can better meet your needs. You can find our staff directory on our webpage (<http://ed.sc.gov/agency/Standards-and-Learning/Instructional-Promising-Practices/>).

Suzette Lee
slee@ed.sc.gov
803-734-6103

2008–09 Best Practice Seminar Series

To support the South Carolina academic standards, the SCDE Office of Instructional Promising Practices in collaboration with the South Carolina Council of the International Reading Association (SCIRA) will be hosting a series of best practices in literacy seminars during the 2008-09 school year. Registration is \$75 per session, which covers the cost of lunch and a related professional text. The all-day sessions—9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.—will be in Columbia.

To register, please go to the registration link at <https://elearning.ed.sc.gov>, click on the Catalog & Registration Tab. Click on the Search and Register link, and follow the directions for **new** eLearning Users. Please print a copy of your completed registration for each session **prior to submitting your registration**, as you will need it to make your payment. To pay, attach the registration form to a check made payable to SCIRA (\$75.00 per session) and send both to Judy Redman at Post Office Box 10101, Rock Hill, South Carolina 29731. No purchase orders will be accepted.

Session	Date	Presenter	Topic	Location	Electronic Registration Online Session
1	10/14/08	 Kendall Haven	Storytelling as an Instructional Tool	Saluda Shoals River Center	OIPP 3001
2	11/18/08	 Michael Ford	Do-Able Differentiation	Brookland Baptist Conference Center	OIPP 3002
3	1/7/09	 Nell Duke	Read Aloud and Guided Reading with Informational Text	Brookland Baptist Conference Center	OIPP 3003
4	2/17/09	 Penny Kittle	Writing: Risk, Voice, and Clarity	Brookland Baptist Conference Center	OIPP 3004
5	3/2/09	 Sara Kajder	New Literacies: Technology to Engage Students	Brookland Baptist Conference Center	OIPP 3005
6	4/21/09	 Ellin Keene	Reading Comprehension	Brookland Baptist Conference Center	OIPP 3006

If you have questions regarding the Best Practice Seminar Series, please contact Caroline Savage at csavage@ed.sc.gov.

Exemplary Writing Program Mini-Conference

The SCDE and the Writing Improvement Coordinating Council sponsored the first annual Exemplary Writing Program Mini-Conference on Friday, October 3, 2008 at the University Center in Greenville, South Carolina. Attendees participated in concurrent sessions featuring schools that have transformed their writing programs and been recognized as having an Exemplary Writing Program through focusing on specific criteria. This conference was planned for teachers, coaches and administrators from schools currently using the detailed criteria as a framework for revising their writing programs or for those schools seeking more information about the Exemplary Writing Program.



If you have questions regarding the Exemplary Writing Program, contact Marcie Ellerbe (mkellerbe@verizon.net) or Caroline Savage (csavage@ed.sc.gov).

Learn as much by writing as by reading.

-Lord Acton (1834-1902)

Reading Recovery Uses Virtual Classroom Technology

On August 14, 2008, more than two hundred Reading Recovery teachers participated in professional development without most having to leave their home districts. Through the use of the South Carolina National Guard's Virtual Classroom, teachers were able to demonstrate an interactive session with teachers in six different locations. Clemson University was linked with Charleston, Spartanburg, Rock Hill, Columbia, and Florence. Teachers were able to view documents, watch videos, and interact with the presenter. The system allowed this session to be accomplished in a timely manner. Providing this session to sites across the state would have taken weeks and a large travel budget.

Many topics in Reading Recovery are dependent on a specific time of year and *Roaming Around the Known* is one of them. Roaming is a period in the child's program that occurs during the first two weeks of lessons. Using the Virtual Classroom Training (VCT) allowed all the teachers across the state to get timely information when it was most needed.



Gifted and Talented Education

Fall in South Carolina brings a flurry of activity in gifted and talented education. This is the time of year for the Grade Two Census Testing Program, in which almost every second grade student in South Carolina is screened for state identification in the academic category. This year the testing occurs November 3 through November 17, 2008. Most districts give both the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), for dimension A screening, and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), for dimension B. This screening process will conclude in the late spring for placement in grade three.

In South Carolina we have a multi-criteria screening process for academic identification. Typically, a student may qualify by meeting the criteria in two of the three dimensions described below.

In Dimension A, called "reasoning abilities," students may qualify in the verbal, nonverbal, or quantitative/mathematical areas, or they may qualify with a composite of all three areas. A student must score above the 93rd national percentile based on age. In this area alone, a student may qualify with a composite score in the 96th national percentile, based on age. The student would need no other qualifying scores.

Dimension B is "high achievement" in reading and/or mathematics. A student must score in the 94th percentile on a nationally norm-referenced test to qualify in this dimension. The mathematical score must occur in mathematical concepts and/or problem-solving. Computation is excluded from consideration. A total reading score must be considered. PACT scores were reported in reading, writing, and a total ELA score. Only the reading score was considered.

Dimension C, "academic performance," is dependent upon the grade level of the student. In grades two and three, a student may be given the primary level of the STAR Performance Task Assessment. These scores are broken down into verbal and nonverbal. A qualifying score for rising third graders is 16, whereas rising fourth graders need an 18 to qualify. For grades four and five, a student may be given the intermediate level of the STAR Performance Task Assessment. A rising fifth grader would need a verbal score of 16 and a nonverbal score of 22 to qualify. A rising sixth grader would need a verbal score of 18 and a nonverbal score of 25 to qualify. For rising seventh graders and above, students may qualify based on a GPA of 3.75 or better in the four core subjects (ELA, math, science, and social studies) and foreign language, if taken.

Most districts offer the opportunity for anyone to nominate a public school child for screening. The screening involves reviewing testing data in place and then deciding if more testing needs to be administered. During this active period, most students are screened by analyzing their spring PACT scores, fall MAP scores, and GPAs, if appropriate. Strict rules determine which scores districts may use and any outdated scores are not be considered. Students who need further assessments are usually scheduled for these during this season. Hopefully, the students who need the specialized academic programming will be identified so we can meet their academic needs.

We are fortunate to have a comprehensive process for identifying academically gifted and talented students. We have an accessible and multi-tiered process, paired with a state definition and a mandate for services, which serve as examples for many other states.

(Rick Blanchard, who works with the state's Gifted and Talented Program, is now in the Office of Academic Standards. He can be reached at 803-734-8335 or rblancha@ed.sc.gov.)

School Library Media Services

Congratulations to the Reader Leaders of the 2008 No Book Left Unread (NBLU) Summer Reading Program, a statewide initiative begun last year by the school library media services! The purpose of the program—open to students in kindergarten through the 12th grade, faculty and staff members—is to encourage recreational reading during the school vacation from June 1 through August 31.



This year 173 schools, representing 54 districts and 8003 students, participated in NBLU. The top student readers in all participating schools read 1,248,892 pages. **All participants read 15,957,224 pages.** If we use 250 as the average number of pages in a book, this total translates to 63,829 books!

Thanks to the support of our corporate sponsors, The Reading Warehouse and Follett Library Resources, the reader leaders in each category will receive a selection of books for the library media center or for their personal library. The top student readers and the top faculty/staff readers will also receive a gift certificate from The Reading Warehouse.

The 2008 NBLU Reader Leaders are

Schools with enrollment of 750 or less:

- Oak Pointe Elementary School (Lexington-Richland District Five), 288,167 pages;
- Buford Middle School (Lancaster County), 1,366,534 pages; and
- Liberty High School (Pickens County), 182,801 pages

Schools with enrollment of 751 or more:

- Midway Elementary School (Anderson 5), 228,604 pages;
- McCants Middle School (Anderson 5), 511,858 pages; and
- Wando High School (Charleston County), 1,038,052 pages

Schools with other grade bands, e.g., K-8, K-12, 4-6:

- Sterling School (Greenville County), 470,885 pages

Buford Middle School and Wando High School had the highest totals respectively of all participating schools!

Reader Leader Students:

- Brad Wilkins (Liberty High School, Pickens County), 50,484 pages
- Jeremy Fowler (Wren Middle School, Anderson District One), 36,460 pages

- Mariah Johnson (Oak Pointe Elementary School, Lexington-Richland District Five), 28,503 pages

Reader Leader Faculty/Staff Members:

- Christopher Simpson (Carolina Forest High School, Horry County), 52,856 pages
- Kathi Wood (Hunter Street Elementary School, York District One), 31,240 pages
- Sandy Steely (Southwood Middle School, Anderson District Five), 29,848 pages

"There are many little ways to enlarge your child's world. Love of books is the best of all."

— Jacqueline Kennedy

South Carolina Reading First School Leadership Team Meeting

School Leadership Teams (SLTs) from thirty-one schools met in Columbia on either September 23 or 24 to begin developing a plan for sustaining South Carolina Reading First (SCRF) within their schools and districts. Twenty-four of the schools are in their fifth year of implementation with funding changes for these schools to occur within the 2009–2010 school year. Over the next four months districts are expected to develop a sustainability plan, which is due to the SCDE by February 2, 2009.



During each day of planning at the SLT meetings, schools worked in their respective teams to determine levels of grant implementation. They accomplished this by reviewing student achievement data, looking for strengths across grade levels, determining goals, describing factors that have contributed to student success, and determining a vision of reading that will have a positive effect on all students.

Project directors were provided a packet to assist in continuing the sustainability plan process. This process will provide opportunities for reflection of the SCRF implementation elements and promote discussions of what is needed to sustain improved student outcomes.

South Carolina Mathematics Advisory Panel

President George W. Bush created the National Mathematics Advisory Panel to address the national problem of mathematics teaching and learning. In March 2008, the National Mathematics Advisory Panel published the report, *Foundations for Success*, which is an examination of what is known about the effective teaching and learning of mathematics and contains recommendations for improving the teaching and learning of mathematics. In response, the SCDE convened a South Carolina

Mathematics Advisory Panel (SCMAP) composed of teachers, mathematics coordinators, higher education faculty, administrators, and others from the South Carolina mathematics community on June 24, 2008. *Foundations for Success* provides the South Carolina education community the opportunity to examine its own policies and practices in light of what is known and to use the comparison for modification and innovation.



National Math Panel Basic Information

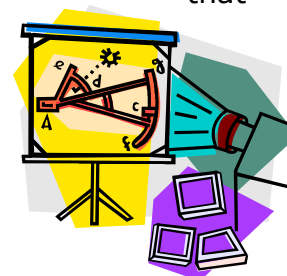
To compete in the 21st century global economy, knowledge of and proficiency in mathematics is critical. Today's high school graduates need to have solid mathematics skills—whether they are headed for college or the workforce. To help ensure our nation's future competitiveness and economic viability, President George W. Bush created the National Mathematics Advisory Panel (National Math Panel) in April 2006.

The panel was charged with providing recommendations to the President and U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings on the best use of scientifically based research to advance the teaching and learning of mathematics. Expert panelists, including a number of leading mathematicians, cognitive psychologists, and educators, reviewed numerous research studies before preparing a final report containing guidance on how to improve mathematics achievement for all students in the United States.

The National Math Panel's final report, issued on March 13, 2008, contains forty-five findings and recommendations on numerous topics including instructional practices, materials, professional development, and assessments. Highlights from the report are briefly summarized below. Please visit www.ed.gov/MathPanel for the executive summary and full report.

Core Principles of Math Instruction

- The areas to be studied in mathematics from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade should be streamlined and a well-defined set of the most important topics should be emphasized in the early grades. Any approach that revisits topics year after year without bringing them to closure should be avoided.
- Proficiency with whole numbers, fractions, and certain aspects of geometry and measurement are the foundations for algebra. Of these, knowledge of fractions is the most important foundational skill not developed among American students.
- Conceptual understanding, computational and procedural fluency, and problem solving skills are equally important and mutually reinforce each other. Debates regarding the relative importance of each of these components of mathematics are misguided.



- Students should develop immediate recall of arithmetic facts to free the “working memory” for solving more complex problems.
- The benchmarks set forth by the Panel should help to guide classroom curricula, mathematics instruction, textbook development, and state assessments.
- More students should be prepared for and offered an authentic algebra course at grade eight.
- Algebra should be consistently understood in terms of the “Major Topics of School Algebra,” as defined by the National Math Panel.
- The Major Topics of School Algebra include Symbols and Expressions; linear equations; quadratic equations; functions; algebra of polynomials; and combinatorics and finite probability.

Student Effort Is Important

Much of the public’s “resignation” about mathematics education is based on the erroneous idea that success comes from inherent talent or ability in mathematics, not effort. A focus on the importance of effort in mathematics learning will improve outcomes. If children believe that their efforts to learn make them “smarter,” they show greater persistence in mathematics learning.

Importance of Knowledgeable Teachers

- Teachers’ mathematical knowledge is important for students’ achievement. The preparation of elementary and middle school teachers in mathematics should be strengthened. Teachers cannot be expected to teach what they do not know.
- The use of teachers who have specialized in elementary mathematics teaching could be an alternative to increasing all elementary teachers’ mathematics content knowledge by focusing the need for expertise on fewer teachers.

Effective Instruction Matters

- Teachers’ regular use of formative assessments can improve student learning in mathematics.
- Instructional practice should be informed by high-quality research, when available, and by the best professional judgment and experience of accomplished classroom teachers.
- The belief that children of particular ages cannot learn certain content because they are “too young” or “not ready” has consistently been shown to be false.
- Explicit instruction for students who struggle with math is effective in increasing student learning. Teachers should understand how to provide clear models for solving a problem type using an array of examples, offer opportunities for extensive practice, encourage students to “think aloud,” and give specific feedback.
- Mathematically gifted students should be allowed to accelerate their learning.
- Publishers should produce shorter, more focused and mathematically accurate mathematics textbooks. The excessive length of some U.S. mathematics textbooks is not necessary for high achievement.

Effective Assessment

The National assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and state assessments in mathematics should be improved in quality and should emphasize the most critical knowledge and skills leading to Algebra.

Importance of Research

The nation must continue to build the capacity for more rigorous research in mathematics education to inform policy and practice more effectively. **For more information, please visit www.ed.gov/mathpanel.**

The national workforce of future years will surely have to handle quantitative concepts more fully and more deftly than at present. So will the citizens and policy leaders who deal with the public interest in positions of civic leadership. Sound education in mathematics across the population is a national interest.

Foundations for Success
National Mathematics Advisory Council
March 2008

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide leadership, professional development, and technical assistance to the education community through the implementation of innovative practices that lead to student learning through standards-based instruction.

Programs, Projects, and Initiatives

To meet our mission, the Office of Instructional Promising Practices offers an array of programs designed to meet the needs of districts, schools, and teachers.

- Best Practice Seminars
- Bridges to Early Learning
- Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP)
- Early Childhood Education
- Exemplary Writing Project
- SC GEAR UP
- iCoaching Program (Science and Mathematics)
- Keeping Learning On Track* (classroom formative assessment pilot)
- Mathematics and Science Programs
- Reading Recovery
- Response to Intervention
- SC Algebra Project
- SC Coalition for Mathematics and Science
- SC Middle Level Literacy Institute
- SC Reading Initiative
- SC Reading First
- School Library Media Services (SLMS)
- Work Sampling

For additional information on these various programs, please visit our website <http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/Standards-and-Learning/Instructional-Promising-Practices>

For information on workshops, training sessions, and other professional development opportunities, please see our office calendar, available online at <http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/Standards-and-Learning/Instructional-Promising-Practices>.