

YOUR ACCESS TO THE REGION



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WELCOME!

This year continues to look like it will be an exciting year for education. Much in the same way that spring bulbs are beginning to bloom in the Great Lakes West region, education is bursting with possibilities for reform and innovation. The National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers have released the Common Core Standards for public review. Many states are actively engaged in planning for the second round of Race to the Top. President Barack Obama has released his blueprint for reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. While in the midst of so much potential for change, in the fall many states will face one of the most difficult budget years they ever have experienced. States are facing so many challenges and opportunities right now that it is difficult to know what to focus on.

No matter how small or large education reform is, its success depends heavily on educators. The individuals who can navigate through the intricate layers of the system are the backbone of education. Now is the time to uncover what makes an educator effective and to support each educator in being effective. This issue of *Your Access to the Region* includes a feature article on the assessment of educator effectiveness from the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (TQ Center), an interview with Tricia Coulter, Ph.D., deputy director of the TQ Center, on defining and evaluating educator effectiveness, and additional resources on educator effectiveness measures.

Finally, everyone at the Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center would like to thank Monique Chism, Ph.D., for her four years of dedication as the Illinois State Manager. Dr. Chism has moved on to the position of Division Administrator for Innovation and Improvement at the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). The responsibilities and roles of this new division at ISBE are covered in the *Profile* of Dr. Chism in this issue.

Linda Miller, Director
Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center
and Great Lakes West staff members

IN THIS ISSUE

Highlights of the Quarter.....	2
Read about the Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center.	
Focus on States.....	3
Hear about ongoing work and focus areas in Illinois and Wisconsin.	
Feature Article	5
Learn about evaluation of educator effectiveness.	
Profile	6
Learn about people, organizations, or issues in the region.	
REL Midwest Update	7
Learn about REL Midwest publications, events, and resources.	
National Perspective	8
An interview with Tricia Coulter from the TQ Center.	
In the News	12
Read select news from Illinois, Wisconsin, and the country.	
Resources	16
Learn about current topics in education.	
Upcoming Events.....	19
Get enriched and renewed by participating in these events.	

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE QUARTER

Wisconsin Response to Intervention Communication Council

The Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center worked with the North Central Response to Intervention (RTI) Collaborative to support the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) with efforts to form and convene a Communication Council on RTI. The Council is made up of Wisconsin stakeholders and national and regional technical assistance centers that work with RTI. Great Lakes West and North Central Collaborative staff facilitated the first meeting of the Council, which was held in Madison, Wisconsin, on March 2, 2010. The purpose of the Communication Council meeting was to discuss historical efforts of the stakeholder organizations related to RTI and to begin developing a common vision for RTI in Wisconsin going forward. The meeting also was held to garner support and to build understanding for the new Wisconsin RTI Center, which is being funded by a grant from DPI. One of Great Lakes West's primary roles was to leverage the available support from all organizations in the North Central RTI Collaborative to ensure that DPI receives coordinated services from all of the organizations involved.

Wisconsin State Manager Al Hovey continues coverage of the Communication Council with information on how the work of the Council is part of the ongoing work with DPI in Focus on States.

21st Century Skills at the Wisconsin Transition Conference

Wisconsin State Manager Al Hovey presented on 21st century skills curriculum at the seventh annual "[Wisconsin Transition Conference](#)" on February 18, 2010. Hovey was invited to present because of his role in developing the 21st century skills science maps with the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA). The presentation was targeted to parents, educators, and adult service providers and focused on how to use the 21st Century Skills Maps created by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (with assistance from NSTA). Hovey presented with Joanne Cashman of the IDEA Partnership, who put a P-16 focus on the skills.

The conference also included a presentation, "A Guide to Connecting Academic Standards and Individualized Education Plans," by Eva Kubinski and Kathy Laffin of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). The Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center supported the work of DPI to develop standards-based individualized-education plans in 2009.

School Improvement Grants

The [Center on Innovation & Improvement](#) (CII) has developed publications and a webinar series to help regional comprehensive centers and states understand the selection of intervention models related to the School Improvement Grants. Earlier this year CII released a new publication, [Handbook on Effective Implementation of School Improvement Grants](#), followed by [two tools](#) for local education agencies (LEAs) to use in selecting intervention models. The series of [five webinars](#) for regional comprehensive centers includes an overview of the intervention models and a separate webinar dedicated to each of the four models. Regional comprehensive centers can use these tools while providing technical assistance to state education agencies as they develop support and guidance for LEAs creating school improvement plans.

International Day at the National Science Teachers Association Conference

The 2010 National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) conference, "Connecting Science Past to Science Future," was held in Philadelphia on March 18–21, 2010. As 2009–10 chair of the International Advisory Board, Wisconsin State Manager Al Hovey was instrumental in planning the international day, "Global Conversations in Science Education—Assessing Student Understanding in Science: Perspectives and Solutions."



Robin Millar, Ph.D., Al Hovey, and Rodger Bybee, Ph.D.

The conference featured two plenary sessions as well as concurrent sessions, poster sessions, and a panel. Rodger W. Bybee, Ph.D., chair, PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) 2006 Science Expert Group, Golden, Colorado, presented the first plenary session, "Assessing Scientific Literacy: International Perspectives and Classroom Possibilities." He spoke about the contexts, competencies, content, and attitudes assessed by PISA. The second plenary session featured Robin Millar, Ph.D., chair, Departmental Research Committee, University of York, United Kingdom, who spoke on "Assessment: A Key Lever of Change in Science Education." His talk built on evidence from two recent research and development projects that explored the role of assessment instruments in changing science teachers' practices.

The day concluded with Norman Lederman, Ph.D., of the Illinois Institute of Technology, who served as chair for the day, presiding over a panel discussion with Dr. Bybee and Dr. Millar. The International Advisory Board already is looking forward to the next activity for this group at the NSTA Conference to be held in San Francisco in 2011.

FOCUS ON STATES

In this section, our state managers provide updates about current plans undertaken by each state to focus efforts on No Child Left Behind (NCLB) implementation. E-mail addresses of state managers are included.

ILLINOIS

Illinois Adopts New AMAO Targets

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To meet federal requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, Illinois needs to have new annual measurable achievement objective (AMAO) targets for ACCESS for ELLs (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) assessment cut scores in place by June 30, 2010. To gather input and consensus from stakeholders across Illinois, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) requested assistance in holding a stakeholder engagement meeting similar to one on English language learner exit criteria supported by the Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center in May 2009. In 2009, Great Lakes West assisted with the planning and facilitation of a meeting to enable ISBE staff to focus on the content and participation with stakeholders. Adopting AMAO targets was an extension of the previous ELL exit criteria work and provided further opportunities for ISBE staff to engage stakeholders.

The AMAO stakeholder engagement meeting took place on April 8, 2010, in Naperville, Illinois. Great Lakes West provided planning and facilitation to support ISBE. The purpose of the meeting was to share with stakeholders the analysis that informed recommendations, explore issues that could impact field use and interpretation factors, and gain consensus before officially adopting the new targets. ISBE shared background information and requirements from the U.S. Department of Education, provided a brief history of the development of AMAO targets to date, and shared the data analysis process used to develop draft recommendations. Stakeholders and ISBE then engaged in a conversation about possible issues related to interpretation and implementation in the field. As a result of the meeting, ISBE will adopt new AMAO targets based on the recommendations of the Division of English Language Learners, which were presented and discussed at the stakeholder engagement meeting.

Illinois Pacesetter Team and Statewide Systems of Support

In July 2009, an Illinois team became involved with the work of the Center on Innovation & Improvement's Academy of Pacesetter States to refine the statewide system of support (SSOS) plan. The Illinois Pacesetter Team has expanded from the five-member team of Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) staff identified for the Center on Innovation & Improvement's Academy of Pacesetter States Summer Session in 2009 to include 12 members from across ISBE divisions. The expanded cross-divisional team includes representatives from curriculum and instruction, English language learners, career and technical education, special education, innovation and improvement, and the office of the superintendent. ISBE and the Pacesetter Team are committed to improving the services provided to all schools and to devoting sufficient resources and attention to make a high-quality statewide system of support a reality.

The Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center and the Center on Innovation & Improvement continue to support the Illinois Pacesetter Team as they engage in weekly planning discussions and participate in monthly distance learning opportunities with other pacesetter states—Alaska, Arkansas, Idaho, Louisiana, Michigan, Montana, Oklahoma, and Virginia. The March distance learning session focused on qualities of an effective evaluation when examining the outcomes of an SSOS and featured Steve Ross, Ph.D., professor and senior research scientist, Johns Hopkins University.

WISCONSIN

Wisconsin Forum on Advancing Educator Effectiveness

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The Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center and the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality continue to facilitate the Forum on Advancing Educator Effectiveness (FAE2). The group of collaborators is meeting to address the question, What are the signature features of state and local education systems that continuously improve standards-based instruction and educator effectiveness?

The Goals of the FAE2 collaborative are to:

1. Continue to refine the elements or components of a provisional FAE2 framework.
2. Discuss the existing frameworks, data, and recent products for documenting educator and instructional effectiveness.
3. Participate in stakeholder organization engagement activities and events.

FAE2 is planning stakeholder engagement activities at the Wisconsin Fall Superintendent's Conference on September 16–17 in Madison (<http://dpi.wi.gov/sprntdnt/fallconf.html>) and the Wisconsin Education Association Council Convention on October 28–29 in Madison (http://www.weac.org/Calendar_And_Events/calendar/WEAC_2010_Convention.aspx).

Response to Intervention

The Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center continues to support the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) in creating a Wisconsin Response to Intervention (RTI) Center. One of Great Lakes West's primary roles in this work is to help DPI identify and clarify RTI-related priorities throughout Wisconsin. In February, Great Lakes West assisted with the design and administration of a survey to collect information on the RTI-related professional development needs and implementation priorities in schools. Results from the survey will be used to guide DPI staff and Wisconsin RTI Center staff in developing professional development support for Wisconsin schools and districts. Great Lakes West also is leveraging the available support from the organizations in the North Central RTI Collaborative to ensure that DPI receives coordinated services from all the organizations involved.

To further inform the planning of the Center, DPI and RTI Center staff created a Wisconsin RTI Communication Council. The Communication Council is a collaborative group made up of Wisconsin stakeholders and national and regional technical assistance centers working with RTI. Great Lakes West and the North Central Collaborative assisted with the planning and facilitation of the Council's first meeting in March. As a result of the first meeting, Wisconsin DPI, staff from the Wisconsin RTI Center, and Communication Council members are working together to develop a common vision of RTI in Wisconsin and identify next steps that will help coordinate RTI efforts in Wisconsin districts and schools.

FEATURE ARTICLE

Evaluating Educator Effectiveness

Excerpt from the Research-to-Practice Brief Methods of Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness by Laura Goe, Ph.D., and Andrew Croft, ETS and the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality

Teacher Effectiveness

Now that nearly all teachers are meeting the criteria to be considered "highly qualified," policy conversations are turning to issues of teacher effectiveness. Ensuring that teachers meet the federal requirements to be considered highly qualified is the foundation upon which teaching and learning is built. The next step is determining whether teachers are providing instruction in ways that will lead to high levels of student achievement (i.e., teacher effectiveness).

Promoting Students' Academic Achievement

Ensuring that students are achieving in tested subjects in tested grades is only part of what effective teachers do on the job. Promoting students' academic achievement is arguably the most important component of their jobs, but teachers contribute to their students' development in myriad ways. For

example, teachers help students learn to work cooperatively with peers; conduct themselves appropriately in classrooms and schools; resolve differences peacefully; and understand their roles as citizens in classrooms, schools, communities, and society as a whole. Teachers also have responsibilities beyond direct instruction, such as working with colleagues to identify at-risk students and develop plans to support them.

Teachers contribute significantly to the establishment and maintenance of supportive, learning-centered environments in their classrooms and schools and work with parents and the community to support educational opportunity and success. Moreover, their relationships within schools (e.g., mentoring new teachers, serving on curriculum committees, providing leadership for extracurricular activities) may not directly impact student learning, but they create an environment conducive to successful teaching and learning. See Goe, Bell, and Little's (2008) five-point definition of effective teachers to learn more about the key responsibilities of effective teachers.

[Read More](#)

PROFILE

This section focuses on people, organizations, and issues that are important to the work that Great Lakes West is doing in the region. In this issue, Great Lakes West profiles Monique Chism, Ph.D., new Division Administrator for Innovation and Improvement at the Illinois State Board of Education.

Monique Chism, Ph.D., Division Administrator for Innovation and Improvement, Illinois State Board of Education

The Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center would like to congratulate Monique Chism, Ph.D., the new Division Administrator for Innovation and Improvement (formerly Federal Grants and Programs) at the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). Dr. Chism earned her B.S. from Ohio University, M.A. from Central Michigan University, and Ph.D. from Michigan State University. She brings more than 13 years of experience centered on instruction, research, evaluation, and designing and implementing professional development. Most recently before joining ISBE, Dr. Chism spent four years serving as the Illinois State Manager for the Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center.



Monique Chism, Ph.D.

In her new role at ISBE, Dr. Chism will oversee the division of Innovation and Improvement, including Title I, Part A, Title II, Title IV, and the carryover of Title V for No Child Left Behind (NCLB) reporting. She also will oversee providing technical assistance to districts implementing programs so they align with the requirements of NCLB; supporting the statewide system of support; and providing technical assistance support to districts related to District Improvement Plans, Restructuring Plans, District Title I Plans, Title I Schoolwide Plans, Parental Involvement as it relates to NCLB, and Private School Participation in Title Programs. Dr. Chism is looking forward to the opportunities and challenges of preparing the new division to support Illinois districts and schools. Her current goal for the division is to focus on building a team that strives for continuous improvement in order to positively impact student outcomes.

REL MIDWEST UPDATE

Briefs Focus on Human Capital Resource Management

Human capital resource management (HCRM) in education refers to training, recruiting, developing, and supporting talented and effective educators throughout their careers. Recent literature identifies HCRM as one of the ways in which districts and states can increase school effectiveness and improve student learning. State Policies on Human Capital Resource Management is a series of REL Midwest briefs that describe state policies in four key HCRM areas—preparation and licensure, recruitment, induction and professional development, and compensation and working conditions. [Reports](#) from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin are available now, with Minnesota scheduled for release soon. Although each brief is state-specific, policymakers in other state and local education agencies may benefit from learning what policies can be offered at the state level for HCRM and the channels through which states have implemented them.



Events Bring Research to Educators

REL Midwest's **Connecting Research to Practice** events provide opportunities for practitioners and policymakers to deepen their understanding of evidence-based research. Visit the [events website](#) for information about upcoming events, newly posted registration links, and archived resources. Here is a preview:

June 25, 2010, Bloomington, Indiana

Effective Leadership to Transform Struggling Schools. REL Midwest and the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Department at Indiana University will cohost a full-day conference designed to engage school and district leaders in a conversation about research on school leadership practices and the connection between that research and the recommendations in the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Practice Guide [Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools](#). Featured presenters include Sam Redding, Ph.D., of the Center on Innovation & Improvement and Eric Camburn, Ph.D., of the Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

August 4, 2010

Online Learning Opportunities for Rural Schools. Designed for rural educators and stakeholders throughout the region, this full-day conference offers research-based information pertaining to online learning and virtual school environments.

Fall 2010

Adolescent Literacy. This full-day conference is designed to help a regional audience of literacy educators understand the research-based recommendations in the IES Practice Guide [Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices](#) and apply those recommendations to their practice.

Resources to Explore

- Practice Guides from the [What Works Clearinghouse](#), an IES initiative, address instructional challenges and assess the rigor of research evidence on the effectiveness of interventions. Among the topics of Practice Guides available now are dropout prevention, access to higher education, and

improving adolescent literacy. To learn more about integrating evidence-based practices into classroom instruction, visit the partner site for [Doing What Works](#).

- Do you need information on a current education issue? Contact REL Midwest through [Ask A REL](#). This collaborative reference desk service functions like a technical reference library and can provide you with links to pertinent websites and resources, referrals to IES research projects and federally funded education organizations, and region-specific education information. In responding to your request, REL Midwest can tap the expertise of RELs nationwide as well as the resources and staff of the National Library of Education.

NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

An Interview With Tricia Coulter, Ph.D., Deputy Director, National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality

Interview by Marie Husby-Slater, Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center at Learning Point Associates

On April 1, Great Lakes West staff member Marie Husby-Slater sat down with Tricia Coulter, PH.D., to discuss teacher effectiveness and developing and sustaining evaluation systems for teacher effectiveness. Dr. Coulter is the deputy director of the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (TQ Center). The TQ Center has created many resources and has provided a great deal of assistance to regional comprehensive centers on the issue of teacher evaluation and effectiveness. However, this opportunity provides a unique resource for accessing the TQ Center's expertise in this area.

Great Lakes West: Who is responsible for defining teacher effectiveness?

Dr. Coulter: Defining teacher effectiveness should be a collaborative effort because how you define what you mean by teacher effectiveness has a huge impact on the types of methods and measures of evaluation that you will put in place. For example, if you define teacher effectiveness solely based on student achievement, you will want to put all of your resources and efforts into making sure that you have a good way of measuring student achievement as well as having a good data system where you can track achievement. If you also include teacher practice, then you want to specify what kinds of teacher practice are important. Is lesson planning important? Is how teachers behave inside a classroom important? Each of these definitions would lead you to different methods of evaluating teachers.



Tricia Coulter, Ph.D.

It is necessary to have people in the room who have awareness of and investment in how you are going to define effectiveness. So, it is going to be the teachers, the central office staff, and the state education agency staff. Depending on how much the state is going to mandate the evaluation system be put in place versus how much control the districts are going to have, you may want to include district superintendents and the state superintendent.

One of the often-overlooked stakeholder groups is state legislators because if there are any policy ramifications for how you are going to evaluate teacher effectiveness, then legislators need to know on the

front end so they can be invested in getting the best policies in place. You want the voice of the teacher, which can be accomplished by having teachers or the teachers union representative in the room.

It is important from the outset to have engagement from all of these stakeholder groups because that makes the development and implementation, as well as the continued improvement, of an evaluation system so much easier. Because your efforts start with how to define effectiveness, it really is important to have all of these groups together from the outset.

Great Lakes West: *How would this collaborative group go about defining teacher effectiveness?*

Dr. Coulter: The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality has good resources on that. We have the Communication Framework for Measuring Teacher Quality and Effectiveness. It is a way of talking about what matters to you. You will want to look at the teacher standards that you have in place and decide if they are outcome-based standards. Most of them are now—states really are starting to move toward outcome-based standards. The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) incorporates certain aspects of performance skills inside their standards, and many states use the INTASC Standards. It is a matter of deciding what is important; you need to ask, “What do we care about most in our teaching force?” Each one of the stakeholders is going to have a different aspect.

Classroom teachers and union representatives will probably be concerned about having too much emphasis placed on student academic achievement alone. Considering all the other multitudes of factors that can go into whether or not a teacher is effective and whether or not the teacher’s practice has anything to do with effectiveness. There are other factors not under the teacher’s control that impact whether or not a student is achieving academically. Teachers in the classroom are going to be concerned with having 100 percent of the evaluation based on student achievement.

The legislators are going to be worried about how you are going to decide what we mean by effectiveness for purposes of licensure or certification. They will be concerned with knowing who to hire, who to retain, and who to advance. Legislators will be more concerned with how effectiveness and an evaluation system will interact with the policy ramifications on certification and licensure.

Principals might be interested in whether there is an induction system. They might ask, “How do I know that a teacher is good enough to become a master teacher or a mentor teacher?” So, each stakeholder group is going to focus on an area that is most important to them. It is important to hear all of these aspects so that an understanding can come out of that discussion. That discussion can help uncover which is most important, how you want to prioritize, how will you define effectiveness and create a system that will accommodate the things you find most important. Also important is establishing a system that you can sustain because sustainability is also a huge problem. You could have a great comprehensive evaluation system based on a very detailed comprehensive definition of effectiveness, but you could lack the resources to implement the system.

Great Lakes West: *It sounds like there are a lot of pieces that go into building this big picture. How do you include different stakeholders?*

Dr. Coulter: Stakeholders should be involved from the outset. However, if you get a group that is too large or unwieldy, then you are not going to be able to move anything forward. There has to be someone who is in charge of moving the work forward. Usually what happens is you have a cross-section to represent the sample from the state. You can get the president of the parent teacher association or the president of the

local- or state-level union representative. You look for the higher level people who represent the rest of the group. Your ideal group is a small group with a large backing behind it.

You want the people there who represent all the interests in the state. For example, I was just at a meeting in a state that has a large Native American population. It was important to have a representative from the American Indian Education Bureau there. If you have a state with a large rural group, you need to make sure they are represented; the same is true with a large urban population. These groups have very specific concerns and issues that need to be taken into consideration when dealing with these specific situations within a state. Depending on how much of an issue these things are in the state, you will want to make sure they have a representative at the table. You want that representative to be able to carry the most voices without having that many voices in the room.

Great Lakes West: *Is that person who is making the decisions and making sure things move forward more likely to be at the district level or the state level? Or is it someone else altogether?*

Dr. Coulter: That has been an issue for a while—the need to navigate the relationship between local control and state accountability. The upcoming reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the blueprint for ESEA appear to be asking the state to take a more involved role with issues like evaluating teachers and determining their effectiveness. That is going to bring about a completely new era of negotiations between state accountability and local control. The person that will ultimately be responsible will likely be at the state level because the state will be held accountable. It is important to have district representatives but the person with the most responsibility in the end will likely be the state.

Great Lakes West: *Going back to what you have said about evaluation, what should be the purpose of evaluating teacher effectiveness?*

Dr. Coulter: The purpose should be putting in place methods and processes whereby teachers' strengths and weaknesses can be clearly identified and supported. If you have a teacher who is really good at classroom management, you want to know that so you can use that teacher as a mentor, peer counselor, and teacher leader so other teachers can learn from that person. If, on the other hand, you have a teacher who has difficulties in any particular area, you will know what that area is, so you can immediately put in place targeted professional development and targeted support in order to ensure that they improve.

It is important to realize that a teacher evaluation system is supposed to be for the ongoing improvement and to support teacher effectiveness and student learning. Coming into evaluation with that attitude means you will automatically be looking for more formative evaluations and more formative evaluation data so that you can clearly identify any areas of strength or weakness. These areas can either be utilized or corrected for the betterment of the entire teaching force and for student learning.

Great Lakes West: *What does it take to sustain an evaluation system like the one you just described?*

Dr. Coulter: As with so many other things, it takes energy and resources, and often these are fiscal. When an evaluation system is being created, there needs to be a clear understanding of what the resources are in order to implement the system well. A lot of states and districts use some sort of classroom evaluation or look at classroom observation tools. The challenge in that is to have a classroom observation tool that is as objective as possible, and to do that you will need to have more than one rater. You are going to have to determine how to go about training multiple raters, ensuring that multiple raters are given the time that they need. That means they will need relief time if they are peers in the school, or you will be bringing them in from the outside. That is all money, time, and resources that have to be supported.

You have to make sure that there is a system put in place so that you can evaluate the evaluation system and make sure that it is both providing the data and meeting the purposes of what you wanted the evaluation system to do. The evaluation system also requires expertise, resources, and human time for people to come in and determine if the system is doing the job it is supposed to do. All of these actions are necessary for sustaining a good evaluation system, and they need to be thought about at the outset.

Hopefully, what will happen is you will have a mass of excellent teachers who feel supported and feel like their professional development is being honored and understood. The retention rate would go up, and the attrition rate would go down. There would be a ripple effect of more resources being spent on the evaluation system and the teaching staff in general. This needs to be considered at the outset because what you don't want to happen is to put in this evaluation system, involve all of the stakeholders, get everyone excited about it, and roll it out for one year and then realize you do not have the resources to sustain it.

Great Lakes West: *Once you have developed a definition of teacher effectiveness and an evaluation system, how do you know that they are working?*

Dr. Coulter: Hopefully, evaluation would go up and student achievement would go up if you were looking at student growth that would go up. It would be a good idea to have direct input from teachers themselves about whether they found the evaluation process useful and felt more supported. Have they benefited from professional development that has been directed by the results of the evaluation processes? There is a belief that if you are in a school with a high attrition rate, there is a chance that having a high-quality evaluation system would increase retention of effective teachers. Do you have a greater number of effective teachers because not only are we hoping they would stay but also we're hoping teachers that may have been initially rated as less than effective would get targeted professional development and support that would help them become more effective. The result would be an increase in the percentage of the teaching force that would be effective or highly effective.

Great Lakes West: *What does having a definition of and system for evaluating teacher effectiveness mean for student learning?*

Dr. Coulter: It should mean an increase in student learning. It should mean an increase in student engagement in the scholastic process. Many things happen for children in schools that are not necessarily based on the core academic subjects. You may experience an increase in engagement of community that is a school or an increased civic responsibility. These are things that we do not accept as academic achievement but are aspects of learning. Students are learning to be citizens in a country, they are learning to be part of a group, they are learning to engage with adults and peers around them, and most of it is influenced by the teacher in the classroom. If you have a teacher in a classroom who knows that they are supported in improved practice, then that cannot help but filter down to everything the school provides for the students.

Increased engagement happens when a teacher walks into the classroom that is well managed. That means the students are engaged, they are talking to the teacher, and they are engaged in discussion and creative thinking and analysis. Teacher effectiveness is very important for all aspects of student learning. Without having an evaluation system that is able to determine, identify, and discern strengths and weaknesses of a particular teacher, it is very hard to know how to improve. As soon as you can find out something is working really well or is a challenge that you need to get some support for, it will increase the teacher's effectiveness overall, and that will filter down to having the student population more engaged and learning at a better level.

IN THE NEWS

The following articles were selected to provide easy access to news and resources addressing the key NCLB-related topics within Great Lakes West states and across the country during the past quarter.

ILLINOIS

State Officials Insist School Reform Will Happen—*Springfield Journal-Register*,
March 31, 2010

<http://www.sj-r.com/education/x1838119759/State-officials-insist-on-school-reform-will-happen>

"Whether Illinois wins federal money or not, state education officials have made one thing clear: school reforms are on their way."

Illinois Misses Out in Federal School Cash Dash—*Chicago Sun-Times*,
March 30, 2010

<http://www.suntimes.com/news/education/2130216,CST-NWS-race30.article>

"Deficit-ridden Illinois schools missed out on a windfall Monday when Delaware and Tennessee won millions of dollars in federal 'Race to the Top' funds to improve education."

Quinn: Pension Reform "Mother Of All" Spending Cuts—*My Fox Illinois*, March 25, 2010

http://www.myfoxillinois.com/dpp/news/illinois/03252010_quinn_calls_pension_reform_mother_of_all_spending_cuts

"Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn said if taxpayers, or nay-sayers, wanted spending cuts from Springfield they got them this week."

Tough Economic Times Take Toll on Illinois School Districts—*Illinois State Board of Education*, March 24, 2010

<http://www.isbe.state.il.us/news/2010/mar24.htm>

"ISBE using revised data to avoid penalizing districts for late payments from the state"

Quinn Appears at Springfield School to Defend Tax Plan—*Springfield Journal-Register*, March 11, 2010

<http://www.sj-r.com/education/x1664753922/Quinn-defends-tax-plan-at-Springfield-school>

"Despite a frigid reception from state lawmakers to the idea, Gov. Pat Quinn Thursday launched a public marketing effort to win support for a 33 percent income tax hike to support education."

WISCONSIN

Wisconsin's Race to Top Bid Deemed Subpar—*Wisconsin State Journal*,
March 30, 2010

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/education/89483222.html>

"Wisconsin's application for a share of \$4.35 billion in federal education grants scored in the bottom half of 41 applicants, earning the equivalent of a C-minus grade by government reviewers."

More Wisconsin Students Qualify for Free or Reduced-Price Lunches—*Lakeland Times*, March 30, 2010

<http://www.lakelandtimes.com/main.asp?SectionID=9&SubSectionID=9&ArticleID=11154>

"According to the Department of Public Instruction, 39 percent of students in the state qualify for free or reduced price meals this year, representing a nearly 10 percent increase from the 29.5 percent of students who qualified during the 2003-2004 academic year."

Wisconsin Overall 2009 NAEP Reading Scores Hold Steady—Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, March 24, 2010

http://dpi.state.wi.us/eis/pdf/dpinr2010_40.pdf

"Wisconsin's overall scale scores in the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading tests held steady from 2007."

Incoming MPS Chief Thornton Gives Clues to His Priorities—*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, March 20, 2010

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/education/88742272.html>

"The incoming superintendent of Milwaukee Public Schools says he doesn't take over until July 1, he doesn't want to interfere with the current superintendent, William Andrekopoulos, and he's just beginning to know the people and issues in his visits to Milwaukee. So he doesn't want to get too specific or out front with what he wants to do with his new job."

Virtual Schools Have Pluses and Minuses, Report Says—*Milwaukee Journal-Register*, February 9, 2010

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/education/83985117.html>

"Virtual charter schools spend both more and less per student than traditional public schools in Wisconsin. Their students score higher in reading but generally lower in math than the statewide public school average. Their parents are satisfied with their students' education, but school districts that are losing students to them suffer financially."

For the Full Report: <http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lab/reports/10-3full.pdf>

ELSEWHERE IN THE NATION

Following are news articles related to the topics of assessment and accountability, instruction, innovation and improvement, national policies and initiatives, and teacher quality.



ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

NAEP Reading Results Deemed Disappointing—*EdWeek*, March 30, 2010

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/03/24/27naep.h29.html?tkn=VWBFFIFccObcHX6kpQ6mseRq23TvgfOEgTvR&cmp=clp-ecseclips>

"Reading scores stayed flat for 4th graders and rose only slightly for 8th graders on the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress, results that some find disappointing after many years of intensive attention to improving the reading skills of American students."

Expansion of A.P. Tests Also Brings More Failures—*New York Times*, February 10, 2010

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/11/education/11college.html?ref=education>
<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/11/education/11college.html?ref=education>

"The College Board's Advanced Placement program is expanding in American high schools, but as it moves from being a program primarily for elite students, the number of test-takers who fail A.P. exams is growing — although not as much as the number of those who pass."

Failure Rate for AP Tests Climbing—*USA Today*, February 4, 2010

http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2010-02-04-1Aapscores04_ST_N.htm

"The number of students taking Advanced Placement tests hit a record high last year, but the portion who fail the exams — particularly in the South — is rising as well, a USA TODAY analysis finds."

President Obama Seeks to Revamp No Child Left Behind Teaching Standards—*Washington Post*, February 2, 2010

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/01/AR2010020101129.html>

"As legions of schools nationwide fall short of academic targets, the Obama administration proposed Monday to toss out the pass-fail measure that for 15 years has been the bedrock of the school accountability system and replace it with an index that would reward educators who prepare students for college and careers."

HIGH SCHOOL

More High-Schoolers Reinvent or Skip Their Senior Year—*USA Today*, March 25, 2010

http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2010-02-25-senioryear25foronline_st_N.htm

"A growing number of high-school students are choosing internships or taking advantage of early graduation or other options rather than attending a traditional senior year. Many of the students are academically advanced and may be restless or looking to accelerate the progress of their education. The trend is catching on with education policymakers as well, with a new program in eight states allowing students to take college and high-school courses concurrently."

For Students at Risk, Early College Proves a Draw—*New York Times*, February 7, 2010

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/08/education/08school.html?ref=education>

"While North Carolina leads the way in early-college high schools, the model is spreading in California, New York, Texas and elsewhere, where such schools are seen as a promising approach to reducing the high school dropout rate and increasing the share of degree holders — two major goals of the Obama administration. "

INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT

In Charge of Charters—*Politics and Society*, March 16, 2010

<http://politicsandsociety.usc.edu/2010/03/charter-schools.html>

"With charter schools at the forefront of education reform agendas on both sides of the aisle, a critical question needs to be asked: Who's taking responsibility for charter schools?"

Charter Schools: Do They Work?—WBHM, March 10, 2010

<http://www.wbhm.org/News/2010/charterschools-efficacy.html>

"There are nearly 5,000 charter schools across the country. They educate more than 1.5 million students. And President Obama wants more. But do they work? There are a handful of charter schools in wealthy communities and, perhaps not surprisingly, they tend to have high test scores. But most charter schools are in low-income, often minority neighborhoods. How do they fare?"

NATIONAL POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

Before It Ends, Schools 'Race' Is a Success—*New York Times*, April 7, 2010

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/08/opinion/08thu2.html?ref=opinion>

"Plenty of states will line up for the remaining \$3.4 billion. But even if the program ended today, it already has had a huge, beneficial effect on the education reform effort, especially at the state and local levels."

After 'No Child Left Behind'—National Public Radio, March 18, 2010

<http://www.onpointradio.org/2010/03/beyond-no-child-left-behind>

"No Child Left Behind has had American education by the scruff of the neck for years now, with the tests and deadlines and failure tags and penalties that have had American schools both on their toes and in an uproar ever since it was made the law of the land under George W. Bush."

Leaving No Child Behind—*Baltimore Sun*, March 16, 2010

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/editorial/bal-ed.nclb16mar16.0.3326546.story>

"President Barack Obama has made education reform a signature issue of his administration, and the sweeping changes in how school systems are evaluated by the federal government announced over the weekend appear to go a long way toward achieving that goal."

Education Groups Laud, Criticize Obama 'No Child' Overhaul Plan—*USA Today*, March 15, 2010

http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2010-03-14-education_N.htm

"The Obama administration's plan to make sweeping changes to the 2002 No Child Left Behind education law is getting mixed reaction among educators: Teachers unions complained that teachers are being scapegoated by the overhaul; a school board leader praised it but called for more flexibility; and an administrators group said it was just glad to see NCLB go away."

Final Rules Unveiled for 'i3' Innovation Fund—EdWeek, March 8, 2010

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/03/08/25i3.h29.html?tkn=R%5bBF18mh9rfLGKwVHb40WLYVcxQdBO5GtBlh&cmp=clp-ecseclips>

"The U.S. Department of Education stuck to its guns in releasing final rules for the \$650 million Investing in Innovation, or i3, grant program, standing firm in the face of criticism that its proposed guidelines demanded too much from applicants in the way of private-sector match and evidence to back up their proposals."

TEACHER QUALITY

Education Reform: Can Poor Test Scores Get a Teacher Fired?—Christian Science Monitor, March 7, 2010

<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/2010/0317/Education-reform-Can-poor-test-scores-get-a-teacher-fired>

"Reform advocates say school districts should improve teacher quality in part by using such "value added" data. Dozens of districts, including Houston's, have already incorporated the concept into "pay for performance" systems. Education leaders in New York City and the District of Columbia are moving toward linking it to tenure or dismissals. But none has gone ahead as boldly as the Texas district."

Survey: Supportive Leadership Helps Retain Top Teachers—Washington Post, March 3, 2010

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/03/02/AR2010030204203.html?hpid=topnews>

"A national survey of more than 40,000 public school teachers suggests that while higher salaries are far more likely than performance pay to help keep top talent in the classroom, supportive leadership trumps financial incentives."

RESOURCES

This section emphasizes current topics at RCCs, national content centers, and other technical assistance providers.

Toolkit for Implementing the School Improvement Grant: Transformation Model—Center on Innovation & Improvement, April 2010

http://www.centerii.org/resources/Transformation_Toolkit-0409.pdf

The Center on Innovation & Improvement (CII) has released a new resource, *Toolkit for Implementing the School Improvement Grant (SIG) Transformation Model*, to help districts and schools once they have decided to pursue the transformation model. The new toolkit is focused specifically on the transformation model option and provides states and districts with action items and resources for implementing the SIG transformation model.

Enhancing Teacher Evaluation: Effective Practices for Evaluating Teachers of All Students [Archived Webcast]—National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, April 2010

<http://www.tqsource.org/webcasts/evaluatingTeachers/index.php>

The TQ center hosted a webcast on effective practices for evaluation teachers in April 2010. The webcast brought together experts to discuss the existing research and strategies that address evaluating teachers of at-risk populations.

Guide to Teacher Evaluation Products—National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, April 2010
<http://www3.learningpt.org/tqsource/GEP/>

The TQ Center April 15 webcast on teacher evaluation launched a new tool. The *Guide to Teacher Evaluation Products* “can be used by states and districts to explore various evaluation methods and tools that represent the ‘puzzle pieces’ of an evaluation system.”

The Relationship Between Changes in the Percentage of Students Passing and in the Percentage Testing Advanced on State Assessment Tests for Kentucky and Virginia—Regional Educational Laboratory Appalachia, March 2010
<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?projectID=205>

“Under the accountability provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, states are required to assess students in reading and math and to identify them as below proficient or as proficient or advanced (both considered passing)... This REL Appalachia report finds that schools in Kentucky and Virginia with the greatest increases in the percentage testing proficient or better also have the greatest increases in the percentage testing advanced.”

The Nation’s Report Card: Reading 2009—National Center for Educational Statistics, March 2010
<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2010458>

“This report presents results of the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in reading at grades 4 and 8. Results for students in the nation, the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Department of Defense schools are reported as average scores and as percentages of students performing at or above three achievement levels: Basic, Proficient, and Advanced.”

RTI Classification Tool and Resource Locators—Center on Instruction, March 2010
<http://www.rtictrl.org/>

This online resource was created in collaboration with eight states and their seven corresponding regional comprehensive centers. “In addition to guiding states to relevant resources, this online tool will gauge a state’s level of RTI implementation in four areas (referred to here as implementation considerations), based on responses to a short series of questions.”

Instructional Models and Strategies for Teaching: English Language Learners—Center on Instruction, March 2010
<http://centeroninstruction.org/files/Instructional%20Models%20for%20ELLs.pdf>

“This publication offers educators and policy-makers guidance on research-based strategies that have been effective in instructing English Language learners (ELLs) This document outlines key contextual factors that decision-makers should take into account when making instructional choices for ELLs, provides a brief overview of bilingual and English-only instructional models, and considers the influence of the language of instruction on academic outcomes for ELLs. ”

The Implementation of Tiered Interventions and RTI in High Schools [Archived Webcast]—National Center on Response to Intervention, February 2010
http://www.rti4success.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1452

“The High School Tiered Interventions Initiative (HSTII) is a collaborative effort among the Center on Instruction, the National Center on Response to Intervention, and the National High School Center that explores how RTI and tiered interventions are being implemented at the high school level.”

A Systematic Comparison of the American Diploma Project College Readiness Standards with Those of the ACT, College Board, and Standards for Success—Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest, February 2010

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?ProjectID=188>

"This study of four national English language arts standards compares the content of three sets of standards with a benchmark set, the American Diploma Project (ADP), to see how closely the sets agree on what students should know in English language arts to prepare for college."

Processes and Challenges in Identifying Learning Disabilities Among English Language Learner Students in Three New York State Districts—REL Northeast and the Islands, February 2010

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?projectID=116>

"[T]his study examines practices and challenges in the processes applied in three New York State districts in identifying learning disabilities among students who are English language learners. Using interviews with district and school personnel and documents from state and district web sites, the study finds both similarities and differences in practices, with more differences in the prereferral process than in the referral process."

Federal Funding: Overview of K–12 and Early Childhood Education Programs—Government Accountability Office, January 2010

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d1051.pdf>

The Government Accountability Office conducted a study in response to a request from legislative representatives to answer the questions "(1) What is the federal expenditure on K-12 and early childhood education programs? (2) What are the characteristics of these programs? (3) To what extent have these programs completed evaluations?"

School-Site Administrators: A California County and Regional Perspective on Labor Market Trends—Regional Educational Laboratory West, January 2010

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?ProjectID=234>

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

Handbook on Effective Implementation of School Improvement Grants—Center on Innovation & Improvement, January 2010

[http://www.centerii.org/handbook/Resources/Handbook on Effective Implementation of School Improvement Grants.pdf](http://www.centerii.org/handbook/Resources/Handbook_on_Effective_Implementation_of_School_Improvement_Grants.pdf)

The Center on Innovation & Improvement released a report on implementing School Improvement Grants. The new resource was created in collaboration with all five national content centers.

Patterns in the Identification of and Outcomes for Children and Youth With Disabilities—National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, January 2010

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20104005/index.asp>

"This study utilizes existing data collected by the U.S. Department of Education and other federal agencies to provide a national description of identification patterns across time and comparisons of the outcomes for children and youth with disabilities with outcomes of samples including their nondisabled peers."

RTI State Database—National Center on Response to Intervention, January 2010

<http://state.rti4success.org/>

“The State Database provides resources on a number of topics related to response to intervention (RTI). The resources, which range from policy documents and briefs to trainings and tools, were developed by states, districts, or territories, in the U.S. who are in different stages of implementing Response to Intervention.”

Policy Challenges Webinar: Bridging Research and Practice Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices [Archived Webcast]—REL Northeast and the Islands, December 2009

http://www.relnei.org/events.webinararchives.policychallengesadolescentliteracy_12_01_2009.php

“In this webinar co-hosted with the New England Comprehensive Center (NECC), Professor Michael L. Kamil at Stanford University presented five evidence-based recommendations from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Practice Guide: ‘Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices.’ Dr. Kamil chaired the panel that authored the Guide.”

UPCOMING EVENTS

For additional listings, visit the Great Lakes West website to access the [Calendar of Events](#).

May 2010

Dates: May 12, 3–4:30 p.m. ET	Topic: High School Response to Intervention: Progress Monitoring
Location: Online	Audience: Anyone interested in the researcher and practitioner perspectives of RTI and progress monitoring at the high school level
Format: Webinar	Sponsor: National Center on Response to Intervention, National High School Center, Center on Instruction
Dates: May 18, 2010	Topic: Connecting Research to Practice: Helping Students Navigate the Path to College
Location: Ann Arbor, MI	Audience: Grantees of the Michigan College Access Network’s seed funding
Format: Conference	Sponsor: REL Midwest
Dates: May	Topic: Ask the Expert: Chrys Dougherty Senior Research Scientist at the National Center for Educational Achievement (NCEA)
Location: Online	Audience: Interested educators
Format: Discussion	Sponsor: National High School Center

June 2010

Dates: June 14–June 17
Location: Coeur d'Alene, ID
Format: Conference

Topic: Return of the Pacesetters
Audience: Academy of Pacesetting States teams
Sponsor: Center on Innovation & Improvement

Dates: June 20–23
Location: Detroit, MI
Format: Conference

Topic: [40th Annual National Conference on Student Assessment](#)
Audience: Educators, policymakers
Sponsors: Council of Chief State School Officers

Dates: June 28–July 1
Location: Chicago, IL
Format: Conference

Topic: [National Charter School Conference](#)
Audience: Policymakers, educators, administrators, charter school advocates
Sponsor: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dates: July 19–21
Location: Anaheim, CA
Format: Institute

Topic: [U.S. Department of Education Reading Institute](#)
Audience: Teachers, coaches, principals, state and district administrators
Sponsor: U.S. Department of Education

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