

Letter from the Director



April, 2016

Dear Colleague,

As we brush away the remnants of the winter and look forward to spring, I want to update you on three exciting areas of our work together-- new Productivity Webinars, a recently formed Guiding Coalition supporting the Strategic Performance Management initiative, and updates on Strategic Communications benchmarking project.

Productivity webinars offer strategies for supporting schools and districts.

Earlier this year, Dr. Marguerite Roza hosted five webinars to help state leaders explore how they can support districts and schools to operate in a more productive way. These webinars, originally provided to Regional Comprehensive Centers, now are available online. The sessions cover these important topics for the appropriate role of SEAs: building and using information systems, designing funding and regulatory structures, using state leverage over costs, and making the case for productivity to districts and schools. Webinar recordings and presentation slides are available on our website at <http://www.bscpcenter.org/webinars/>. We are eager for you to use this information as a resource to develop a state-specific framework and strategy set related to the SEA's role in increasing productivity. Please contact me or your Regional Comprehensive Center for more information.

Additionally, I am providing a link to a post Marguerite Roza has on the Ed Next website/blog on productivity in education. I find it to be a helpful summary our concept of a "productivity lens", and hope you find it to be a useful productivity resource. <http://educationnext.org/productivity-is-sometimes-seen-as-a-dirty-word-in-education-but-it-doesnt-have-to-be/>

Guiding Coalition advances strategic performance management work.

As the BSCP Center has increased our focus on strategic performance management, we have reached out to state leaders to guide our activities. The Strategic Performance Management Guiding Coalition includes nine SEA leaders as well as six members from Regional Comprehensive Centers from across the nation. Over the next 6 months, the Guiding Coalition will conduct a customized self-assessment around the use of performance management practices at the SEA, explore ideas for state-specific projects on use of performance management, and create a national organization of performance management professionals in education. The group is coordinated by Mark Williams and Dr. Allison Layland.

The Guiding Coalition held its first virtual meeting in March. Dr. Layland presented on her work with strategic performance management and a model for state education agencies. At the April virtual meeting, J. R. Hoyer presented on performance management in the corporate world.

Members of the Strategic Performance Management Guiding Coalition include

State Education Agency Staff

Deb Coffman	Arkansas
Karen Dodd	Kentucky
Heather Gage	New Hampshire
Jason Helfer	Illinois
Matt Jones	Georgia
Michael Merrin	Washington
Brad Neuenswander	Kansas State
Steve Osborn	Rhode Island
Joshua Towns	Indiana

Regional Comprehensive Staff

Frank DeRosa	Great Lakes CC
Marybeth Flachbart	Northwest CC
Heather Hoak	North Central CC
Allison Layland	Florida & Islands CC
Jack Schwarz	Northeast CC
Kerri White	South Central CC

See <http://www.bscpcenter.org/strategicperformancemanagement/> for more information.

The Strategic Communications benchmarking project is conducting pre-work interviews with participating SEAs.

The strategic communication project is well underway. The purpose of the project is to support SEAs as they strengthen their internal and external communication processes, while also focusing on specific communication challenges each has. Five states are participating in the project, which involves documenting current communication practices, sharing current processes with other participating states, analyzing strengths and challenges under guidance of a communications expert. Currently KS, AL, IN, NC and AR are completing pre-work and site visits will be underway shortly. Topics the SEAs will be focusing on include documenting communication improvements from last year's benchmarking project; working toward connecting communication across key SEA departments; tackling the constant challenge of ensuring communication gets down to classrooms; measuring the success of communication strategies; and writing communication plans. Stay tuned for more updates as we learn more from the site visits. Meanwhile, we are continuing to add more tools to the BSCP website at <http://www.bscpcenter.org/StrategicCommunicationTools/>.

I am hoping you have beautiful spring weather in your area. I look forward to continuing to updating you with our work at the BSCP Center in my next letter. Happy Spring!

Sincerely,

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