



Building State Capacity  
and Productivity Center



September 2017

Greetings Colleagues,

With the coming of fall comes a beautiful change in the colors of our landscapes. And so it is with the BSCP Center. During the past few weeks you may have noticed the new colors and design of our logo. You will also see the same changes taking place in the BSCP Center website. We hope you like the fresh new look as we move into year 6 as much as I do. Happy fall everyone.

## How does the Converter Tool assist states in the ESSA financial transparency requirements?



<http://www.bscpcenter.org/>

The Edunomics Lab, in partnership with the BSCP Center, developed an excel tool that enables users to preview school level expenditure information in a format that satisfies the ESSA financial transparency requirement. In addition to the excel tool there is a School Level Financial survey (SLFS) converter tool guide that provides additional information on the use and general tool navigation of the SLFS converter tool.

The converter tool is best suited for states working to meet the financial transparency requirement that do not already have a chart of accounts with location code, or may need more time to refine or fully implement a process for obtaining digital school level data, and/or for SEAs that already have SLFS data and would like to explore that data as an interim step in meeting the requirement.

The real upside of the new ESSA financial transparency reporting requirement is the opportunity for SEAs to build an information system that helps districts and schools leverage their dollars to do the most for students. While the SLFS Converter Tool can help states assemble financials by school, a more sophisticated information system will be needed for the system to use the data in a way that can drive educational improvements. Such an information system would incorporate



contextual information, such as student demographics and student performance, to enable stakeholders to better understand potential drivers of spending differences across schools and districts.

I anticipate that this tool will be a helpful resource for many of our readers.

## Have you discovered the Strategic Communications Toolbox?

If you have not had an opportunity to look at the new BSCP Center Communication Toolbox it is now on our website <http://www.bscpcenter.org/toolbox/>. The toolbox is based on the BSCP Strategic Communications Framework to help SEAs increase their capacity to support statewide education reform through coherent communication processes. The six modules in the toolbox are designed to provide guidance, examples from the field, and tools for SEAs to use no matter where they are in their communication planning process.

Recently a three-part Communication Toolbox webinars series was held. This series was developed and designed to show how SEAs can use the Strategic Communication Toolbox to develop or enhance existing communication plans. Watch our website as the webinar series will be released soon. I would like to thank Melissa McGrath from CCSSO, Kimberly Friedman Arkansas Department of Education, Commissioner Randy Watson and Denise Kahler from the Kansas Department of Education and the Central and South Central Regional Comprehensive Centers for sharing their expertise on the webinars.

### Key Concepts about Strategic Communications

- Centralized, systemic, proactive, approach driven by processes
- Translates agency goals into clear actions
- Designed to gain stakeholder understanding, input, and support
- Disseminates information from “the inside out”
- Connects policy to implementation

Sincerely,

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## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



### Building State Capacity and Productivity Center

The Building State Capacity and Productivity Center (BSCP Center) focuses work on helping state education agencies (SEAs) throughout the country, as they adapt to constrained fiscal resources and increased demands for greater productivity. As State Departments of Education are facing a daunting challenge of improving student performance with diminishing financial resources, the BSCP Center provides technical assistance to SEAs that builds their capacity to support local educational agencies (LEAs or districts) and schools, and to the other 21 regional comprehensive centers and national content centers that serve them, by providing high quality information, tools, and implementation support. The partners in the BSCP Center are Westat, the Academic Development Institute, and the Edunomics Lab (Georgetown University).

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