

Letter from the Director

March 2014

Dear Colleagues,

The work of the BSCP Center continues to be gratifying. State education agencies (SEAs) are taking on challenging agendas, and we are pleased to be able to participate with the Regional Comprehensive Centers in that important work. We are learning a great deal together and accomplishing a lot.

Current BSCP Center Work—You are aware from previous Letters that the current work BSCP Center is focusing on is Communication Benchmarking, Managing Performance in a System of Support, productivity webinars, and the Chief Performance Officer initiative. We have also published six *Solutions* papers and *The SEAs of the Future* Volume 3 publication is under development. In addition to those initiatives, the BSCP Center is also able to assist SEAs and Regional Comprehensive Centers with individual requests that fit within the framework of our support. Often these requests begin as a basic request which may develop into a consultancy with a group or even become topic for one of the [Solutions](#) publications. The range of requests is wide. The Center has provided SEAs with assistance in reviewing flexibility waivers; acting as thought partners around strategic planning issues; serving as an outside resource for examining hiring requirements; and, discussing ideas for SEA leadership on organizational structures and leadership issues, productivity, and financial issues. A rapidly emerging new topic is how an SEA's organizational structure impacts the efficiency and effectiveness of its functions. Several states have expressed interest in addressing that question. The requests about structure appear driven by state efforts to integrate multiple initiatives, anticipate budget reductions, and implement newly developed strategies.

Chief Performance Officer Group Plans Face-to-Face Meeting—We are in the process of scheduling a face-to-face meeting with the Chief Performance Officer group and we are determining common *problems of practice* for the meeting focus. States represented in this initiative include: Maryland, Illinois, Louisiana, Kentucky, Texas, Massachusetts, Washington and, recently, Nevada, with the potential of others joining. Regional Comprehensive Center representatives will be invited to the Chief Performance Officer meeting which will be held this spring. Our next priorities with this group are to add new members, with similar positions, through practical and applicable activities and create a closer support network.

Productivity Webinar Series Continues—Dr. Marguerite Roza, partner in the BSCP Center, recently facilitated the third in a series of productivity webinars. It is entitled, [Building a State Information System to Support Improvements in Productivity](#). We had 73 participants for the

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

webinar and have posted it at www.bscpcenter.org if you missed it or would like to share the webinar. A participant survey is being conducted and results will be shared later. If you would like to view the first two webinars in this series, click on these titles—[*Staring at a Decade of Budget Gaps: How Can States Drive Productivity Gains in Public Education?*](#) and [*Understanding the Productivity Landscape in Your State*](#)—or go to www.bscpcenter.org and click on the [Events](#) tab for easy access to the recordings at your convenience.

Finally, I invite you to go to the Harvard Education Press blog at <http://hepg.org/blog/110> and read, *The Role of Resource Reform in Improvement and Innovation*, written by BSCP Center research associate, Dr. Heather Zavadsky, promoting a recent [*The SEA of the Future*](#) publication.

Sincerely,



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Building State Capacity and Productivity Center

The Building State Capacity and Productivity Center (BSCP Center) focuses on helping state education agencies (SEAs) throughout the country, as they adapt to reduced 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 Edvance Research, Inc., the Academic Development Institute, the Center on Reinventing Public Education (University of Washington), and the Edunomics Lab (Georgetown University).

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