

Letter from the Director

July 2014

Dear Colleagues,

We hope that you are having an enjoyable summer. At the BSCP Center, our work is progressing steadily, and I would like to bring you information about our progress.

Update on the Support Recognition Accountability and Support Process

The commitment of providing continuing technical assistance is the hallmark of the BSCP Center's Support Recognition Accountability and Support (SRAS) process. The two participating states, Virginia and Mississippi, are entering into an annual review of their SRAS work with the assistance of Tom Kerins and Susan Hanes from the BSCP Center. After a year of monthly conference calls, it is time to review the progress the two state education agencies are making on their indicators, which have been selected by each state, and reflect on the areas of success and remaining challenges. Also, in consultation with their state chief school office, each state senior staff leadership team is reviewing the remaining indicators, selected at the beginning of the project, and determining which of them seem appropriate to work on for the upcoming year. Please contact me if you are interested in learning more about this initiative.

Chief Performance Officer Group Will Meet in San Antonio

I look forward to our first face-to-face meeting with the Chief Performance Officer (CPO) group to be held in San Antonio on September 25 and 26, 2014. CPOs from the states of Maryland, Illinois, Kentucky, Texas, Massachusetts, Washington, and Nevada will be in attendance, along with the Regional Content Center Director or designated representative. A robust agenda will be established based on the *problems of practice* identified by the group, along with ample time to network and discuss the developing role the chief performance officer plays within the state education agency. Logistical details are being developed and will be forwarded to participants as they evolve.

Strategic Planning Work is Underway in the Illinois Education Agency

With Race to the Top grants ending in 2015, Rachel Trimble from the Midwest Comprehensive Center asked us to facilitate a strategic planning session with the Illinois Race to the Top District Collaborative Network core team to help establish goals, worthy targets, and success indicators to measure the work it does with the Race to the Top districts in the state. The first session was held in June in Bloomington at the Illinois State Board of Education, facilitated by Kenny Patterson from the BSCP Center with a second session planned for the end of July. We are pleased to be part of this process in Illinois.

Developing and Managing Talent in the SEA Benchmarking Initiative is Launched

In our work at the Center we observe that state education agencies (SEAs) are reframing their work to be more coordinated and strategic; however, talent in most SEAs continues to be in large part defined by federal programs and oriented toward the routines of compliance. SEAs hoping to complete the pivot from a compliance focus and implement new strategic initiatives are going beyond their existing organizational charts to seek individuals with strong management, entrepreneurship, and strategic visioning skills. This is the focus of BSCP Center's second benchmarking initiative, Developing and Managing Talent in the SEA. Two kick-off webinars were held to gather insights from the Regional Comprehensive Centers (RCC) participants. Heather Zavadsky, Kristin Nafziger, Betheny Gross, and Ashley Jochim are leading this initiative for the Center and are now in the process of reviewing the ideas gained in the webinars to develop a project description that will be distributed to all RCCs and SEAs.

BSCP Partners Present at CCSSO Summer Institute and SCASS Group on Supports and Interventions

Sam Redding is leading the CCSSO/SCASS Group on Supports and Interventions which met this month in New Orleans. The group is designed as an intimate opportunity for SEA support and intervention leaders to exchange information and ideas on supporting struggling schools and districts. BSCP Center researcher Dr. Heather Zavadsky, presented findings on how states can support districts to implement system-wide school improvement and turnaround approaches. On the second day Michigan and Oregon presented their SEA intervention approaches and provided participants with the opportunity to gain feedback and ideas about their strategies.

Several BSCP partners attended the CCSSO Summer institute in early July. The institute featured CCSSO's upcoming strategic plan and delivered a variety of presentations, including topics on college and career readiness, data privacy, national benchmarking, and a discussion on the role of the state education agency led by Andy Smarick (from Bellwether Education) and Paul Hill (BSCP Center partner from the Center on Reinventing Public Education). Marguerite Roza, BSCP Center partner from Edunomics Lab, presented on building SEA capacity. CCSSO case studies on Louisiana's Recovery District approach, and Idaho's education reform, written by BSCP Center researcher Heather Zavadsky, were disseminated at the conference.

I invite you to keep in close communication with us at the Center as it is one of the most productive ways for us to know your needs as we plan and develop our work. Your suggestions are always welcomed and valued. Enjoy your summer and remember to take time for some relaxation and reflection.

Sincerely,



Dean H. Nafziger, Ph.D.

Director

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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 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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