

# Letter from the Director

September 2015

Dear Colleagues,

At the BSCP Center we are launching our fourth year of work! We are very grateful for the collaborative relationships we have been able to establish with so many of you, and we look forward to continuing them. In formulating our work for the year, we met with the leadership of many states, and we gained great insight from the deep knowledge about state work from within the Regional Comprehensive Centers (regional centers). I am appreciative of the insightful feedback from colleagues who assisted us in crafting our work to support you. I want to give you a short description of our plans for the coming year.

BSCP confirms four major areas of focus for Year 4. The original BSCP Center goals will remain in place: 1) building the internal organizational capacity of state education agencies (SEAs) and 2) building the organizational capacity of states to assist district- and school-level implementation of initiatives designed to improve student outcomes. In response to state and regional center suggestions, we are focusing our work in four areas for the upcoming year. By focusing our attention on these major areas, we will be able to concentrate our resources and assist state initiatives more fully with: 1) Serving the SEA of the Future; 2) Strategic Communication; 3) Strategic Performance Management; and, 4) Advancing System Productivity.

**The BSCP Center launches a Strategic Performance Management process that guides SEA leadership.** Sam Redding from the BSCP Center has thought about, written about, and consulted with SEAs and regional centers about two things over the past decade: 1) establishing systems of support for district and school improvement, and 2) organizing SEAs to most effectively do their work. Allison Layland, has worked on strategic planning in the corporate world, in SEAs, and now in a Comprehensive Center (Florida & Islands). Over the past several months, Sam and Allison have collaborated to produce for BSCP a manual, *Strategic Performance Management* at <http://www.bscpcenter.org/pmt/assets/spm.pdf>, that guides SEA leadership through the process of: 1) creating (or revisiting) a strategic plan, 2) conducting an analysis of the organization's functions and structures, and 3) putting in place a performance management system.

One result of the approximately 42-hour process with a chief state school officer and state leadership is that everyone in the agency understands their role in carrying out agency strategies and pursuing agency goals. The second result is that everyone in the agency works in well-defined units toward milestones and targets, reviews progress frequently, and applies their ingenuity in discovering more productive paths to common ends.

In September, Sam and Allison launched the Strategic Performance Management technical assistance process with the South Central Comprehensive Center and one of the Center's states. They are now responding to requests from other regional centers and states.

**Strategic Performance Management Orientation**—On December 10 and 11, the BSCP Center will provide regional center personnel an orientation to Strategic Performance Management and the BSCP Center's other performance management tools and technical assistance offerings. For regional centers interested in attending, please contact Lois Myran at [info@BSCPcenter.org](mailto:info@BSCPcenter.org). States interested in the process should contact their regional center or Lois Myran at the BSCP Center.

**Strategic Communication Work Continues**—The BSCP Center continues the Strategic Communication efforts with SEAs and regional centers. Now that we have provided foundational information about strategic communication during our cross-state convening in July, we want to address a more challenging aspect—making communication a central aspect of state work. Therefore, we are continuing our collaboration with interested states and Regional Centers to develop ways to evaluate the effectiveness of communication strategies, align communication within the SEA, and promote important improvement initiatives.

An important next step in our planning is to create the means to help states formulate strategic approaches that result in holistic and integrated communication systems rather than disparate pieces like internal communication and stakeholder engagement, for example. We believe that developing a clear *logic model* and a *theory of action* that represents effective state communications is necessary. To accomplish this, a team consisting of representatives from the BSCP Center and South Central, Central, Mid-West, and Great Lakes Comprehensive Centers are currently developing a logic model and theory of action. We hope to have this information ready to share with you in the next Director's Letter to use as the backbone for future strategic communication work.

It is always my pleasure to provide an update on the collaborative work we are doing with many of you. Enjoy the beginning of the fall season that signals the return to school for students, the most important reason we are engaged in this work.

Sincerely,



Dean H. Nafziger, Ph.D.

Director, Building State Capacity & Productivity Center at Edvance Research  
210-558-4101 or [dnafziger@edvanceresearch.com](mailto:dnafziger@edvanceresearch.com)

### **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, and the Edunomics Lab (Georgetown University).

Visit us at:



[www.bscpcenter.org](http://www.bscpcenter.org)

