

Letter from the Director

November 8, 2013

Dear Colleagues,

Again, it is my pleasure to share the continued work of the BSCP Center with you. Last month I provided an update on several of our initiatives and for a second time I would like to bring you up-to-date in a few more areas.

SEA of the Future, Volume II—We are actively working on a November release for *The SEA of the Future, Prioritizing Productivity*. This publication offers a fresh outlook on four issues relevant to SEAs. The first essay—*Next Generation of Teacher Evaluation Reform: Driving Teacher Quality from the Statehouse*—is co-authored by Drs. Betheny Gross and Ashley Jochim of the Center on Reinventing Public Education. Several experts in the teacher evaluation field, with diverse experiences and backgrounds, were interviewed and shared their insights and challenges in designing and implementing future teacher evaluation systems. The second essay, *Getting Beyond the Data: The State Role in Fostering Continuous Improvement* is authored by the Data Quality Campaign. In this second essay, states leading the way in longitudinal data systems provide examples of effectively using data systems to drive productivity decisions. The third topic, by Marguerite Roza, Ph.D. of the Ednomics Lab at Georgetown University—*Leveraging Productivity for Progress: An Imperative for States*—examines ways of incorporating productivity conversations in all education arenas. A final topic offers concrete ideas about how state education leaders can influence retirement benefit decisions in order to make them contribute to productivity needs in their state. This section, *Teacher Retirement Benefits: A More Active Role for State School Chiefs and Their Agencies* is co-authored by Drs. Marguerite Roza and Michael Podgursky (University of Missouri). We look forward to getting *The SEA of the Future, Volume II* out to all of our readers later this month.

Redesigned BSCP Center Website Launched—We are pleased to announce that the BSCP Center has just launched a new and enhanced website, still located at BSCPcenter.org. On our new website, along with our featured publications, you will find information on our authors, including bios and photos, and their related, published work within the Center. We have enhanced search features on the site, which allows the reader to easily find publications by type, author, and/or topical keywords for ease in use. Please join our social media site on Twitter [@BSCP_Center](https://twitter.com/BSCP_Center) and sign up for our RSS feed. You will find full contact information for the BSCP Center and its four partner organizations. We invite you to peruse our new site and to share any feedback with us.

Managing Performance in the System of Support: Virginia Takes the Lead—The BSCP Center has begun working with state education agencies (SEAs) to assist them in strengthening their systems of support for district and school improvement with a project called *Managing Performance in the System of Support* (Managing Performance). The BSCP Center arranges for the year-long technical assistance project with the chief state school officer who designates a state leadership team for the work. The Regional Comprehensive Center assists through the year in facilitating leadership team work sessions, and BSCP staff meet monthly via conference call with the team. The project is based on the BSCP Center’s published rubric with 52 indicators for a strong system of recognition, accountability and support (see at BSCPcenter.org).

In an initial two-day training, the SEA team assesses the 52 indicators and prioritizes a subset to address, adding additional indicators as some are implemented. The BSCP Center’s IndiSEA™ web-based performance management tool is used by the team to develop and implement its plan to strengthen its system of support.

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) began the Managing Performance project in August 2013, with a cross-functional leadership team from key VDOE departments, as well as, BSCP Center consultants, Dr. Thomas Kerns and Dr. Susan Hanes. VDOE sees this process as integral to its implementation of its flexibility plan and integration of various departments critical to district and school improvement. The management system established in the project will continue to provide a platform for internal collaboration and improvement beyond the scope of the project.

The Virginia team is comprised of members representing several offices within the state agency including: The Office of School Improvement, Program Administration and Accountability, Special Education Program Improvement, and Instruction. Using the ESEA flexibility waiver and the statewide system of support as a foundation, the team has identified indicators of effective practice related to several areas including: communication with stakeholders, development of resources for English language learners, and integration of school division assistance programs to better serve students with disabilities.

The Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center (ARCC) has been instrumental in providing resources to support the team with implementing the components of their action plan. For example, technical assistance for teachers of English language learners was identified as an area for growth. This resulted in a collaboration between the ARCC and the Virginia team to develop plans for creating useful online resources for teachers and other division staff to support instruction in all content areas with a special emphasis on English language learners. All materials developed will be posted on the VDOE website, as well as the ARCC’s network portal.

The IndiSEA™ online performance management tool has provided the structure for the team to conduct its work in a “virtual environment” through Web-based meetings and a transparent process for developing, implementing, and monitoring the action plan.

For more information about this project please contact Dr. Dean Nafziger, BSCP director, at dnafiger@edvanceresearch.com. For a state perspective, contact Dr. Yvonne Holloman at the Virginia Department of Education at Yvonne.holloman@doe.virginia.gov.

Thank you for your comments and feedback on the work of the BSCP Center. I invite you to continue to provide us with your insights and ideas. I appreciate the collaboration we have experienced with all of you.

Sincerely,



Dean H. Nafziger, Ph.D.
Director
Building State Capacity and Productivity Center at Edvance Research
210-558-4101
dnafiger@edvanceresearch.com

New Solutions Publication Just Published

We are pleased to announce the fourth publication in the BSCP Center's *Solutions* series entitled: [*Functional Coherence in the State Education Agency: A Structure for Performance Management*](#).

This publication addresses the question, "How does a state education agency create an organizational structure that fosters an environment for performance management that continuously improves outcomes?"

At the end of the publication, you will also find a brief survey (link provided below) for your feedback. This brief survey will take **less than 5 minutes** and we will use your valuable feedback for continuous improvement to our work.

The survey link is located at the end of [*Solutions Issue #4*](#). Thank you for your opinions.

SEA of the Future, Volume II

Look for a November release for *The SEA of the Future, Prioritizing Productivity*. This publication will focus on four issues relevant to SEAs: **Next Generation of Teacher Evaluation Reform: Driving Teacher Quality from the Statehouse*, **Getting Beyond the Data: The State Role in Fostering Continuous Improvement*, **Leveraging Productivity for Progress: An Imperative for States* and **Teacher Retirement Benefits: A More Active Role for State School Chiefs and Their Agencies*.

Redesigned BSCP Center Website Launched

The BSCP Center has just launched a new and enhanced website, still located at BSCPCenter.org. We have enhanced search features on the site, which allows the reader to easily find publications by type, author, and/or topical keywords for ease in use. Please join our social media site on [Twitter @BSCP_Center](#) and sign up for our RSS feed.

Collaborative Benchmarking

Project Summary—The BSCP Center, working in concert with the Regional Centers, is creating multi-state groups to help SEAs learn about and adapt best practices that exist among the SEAs and other organizations. The work will be done through a collaborative benchmarking best practices process that will allow SEAs, as critical stakeholders, to develop a comprehensive understanding of best practices that target matters of common interest. Two topics have emerged most prominently: 1) *Benchmarking SEA Strategic Communication around New Statewide Standards*, and 2) *Building State Human Resource Capacity*.

Work is underway on the Benchmarking SEA Strategic Communications initiative and we plan to recruit interested SEAs and their Regional Centers for Building State Human Resource Capacity in the coming months. For more information, please go to the **Capacity Building Projects** tab of the BSCPCenter.org website.

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).

Visit us at:



www.bscpcenter.org

Follow us at:



[@BSCP_Center](https://twitter.com/BSCP_Center)