

Letter from the Director

January 2015

Dear Colleagues,

The BSCP Center is accomplishing a New Year's resolution—updating the BSCP website. At www.bscpcenter.org, you will easily find information organized around the key BSCP Center themes as well as the Center's *Resources and Tools*, *Working Groups and Collaborations*, and *Individual Assistance for SEAs*. I would like to thank Sam Redding and his ADI crew for making the site visually appealing. There is still work to be done, so we ask for your support as we continue to improve the site. Contact us at info@BSCPCenter.org or Lois Myran at loismyran@ndsupernet.com with any feedback or resources you would like to see added to the site.

Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Participates in a Review of the System of Recognition, Accountability and Support Performance Management Rubric

The BSCP Center—under the facilitation of Tom Kerins and Susan Hanes, and Senior Technical Assistant Consultant Rachel Trimble of the Midwest Comprehensive Center (MWCC)—recently assisted the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) in reviewing the System of Recognition, Accountability and Support (SRAS) Performance Management rubric. MDE invited a wide representation of divisions to the two-day session to ensure cross-departmental understanding and an opportunity for broad input on the rubric-based indicators of effective practices. The MDE team reported that the discussions were challenging at times, but rich in content and helped for driving and prioritizing their work. The MDE team will continue to meet to develop plans around the six identified priority indicators with support from the MWCC and BSCP Centers.

Next Steps on Communications Benchmarking

The Central and South Central Comprehensive Centers are leading an effort to help states implement recommendations from the benchmarking report, *State Education Agency Communications Process: Benchmark and Best Practices Project* (available at <http://www.bscpcenter.org/benchmarking>). Their plans include a collaborative convening with project participants, interested Comprehensive Centers, and other SEAs to share ideas about strategic communication approaches. To extend beyond one meeting, we hope to create a Strategic Communications Network, and also assist SEAs in creating clear strategic communications plans. If you wish to be involved, contact Kerri White from the South Central Comprehensive Center (SC3) at kkwhite@ou.edu.

CEELO Develops State Leaders for Early Childhood

Leading and managing early childhood programs across multiple state offices is challenging. Lori Connors-Tadros and colleagues from the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) are addressing this challenge through presentations to the CEELO Fellows program. The BSCP Center will support CEELO by exploring how to lead change in SEAs and other state agencies using Sam Redding's framework entitled *Change Leadership: Innovation in State Education Agencies*, available at <http://www.adi.org/about/downloads/ChangeLeadership.pdf>. Also included in this event will be Rolf Grafwallner, Assistant State Superintendent of the Division of Early Childhood Development with the Maryland State Department of Education. He will share his experiences leading significant policy change on early childhood issues.

Recommended Meeting on Policy and Finance

A number of BSCP staff and associates will present at this year's Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP) annual conference. This year's 40th annual conference, held in Washington D.C. February 26–28, will feature a wide range of topics including accountability systems, teacher supply and evaluation, finance and resource allocation practices and policies, and measurement and evaluation issues to name a few. For those of you not familiar with this conference, you should know that it features the most reputable and respected researchers in the field of education finance and policy, and always contains high-quality and interesting sessions and presentations. BSCP staff and partner presenters include Heather Zavadsky and Kristin Nafziger (BSCP); Ashley Jochim and Bethany Gross (University of Washington); Marguerite Roza and Laura Anderson (Edunomics Lab); and Carrie Conaway (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education). For more information see the AEFP 40th Annual Conference Schedule at <http://www.aefpweb.org/conferences/home>.

Thanks to the Regional Center Directors for making time for my calls this month. I always find these to be energizing as I learn from you and the work of your Centers, and discuss opportunities for collaboration and support. I hope your new year is off to a productive start.

Sincerely,



Dean H. Nafziger, Ph.D.

Director

Building State Capacity & Productivity Center at Edvance Research

210-558-4101

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).

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