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Message From the Director

As we move into 2015 and the fourth year of the Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific (REL Pacific) contract, we'd like to take a moment to thank you for the work we've done together. In this issue of our newsletter, we'll catch you up on some events from the last few months of 2014, and give you a preview of the work we have planned for 2015.

We'd once again like to invite you to share your thoughts, successes and challenges with us. To make a technical assistance request, request more information about our work, or share a story you'd like to see featured in an upcoming newsletter, contact us at relpacific@mcrel.org or at 808-664-8175.

It has been my privilege to serve as the director of REL Pacific for the last three years, and it is with no small measure of sadness that I am announcing my departure from McREL International and REL Pacific. I'm grateful for the many relationships I've formed and the work I've been a part of over the past several years, and look forward to maintaining many of those connections in the years to come. I leave you in the capable hands of Dr. Ceri Dean, REL Pacific's new interim director, and the many talented individuals who make up the rest of the REL Pacific staff. For more on Dr. Dean, please turn to page 11.

Wishing you all the best,

Nolan Malone
Director, REL Pacific at McREL International

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Native Hawaiian Representation Strong at the National Indian Education Association Convention by Joanne OS Kelly

Each year, the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) holds a convention and tradeshow to showcase the latest in Native education research, legislation, and culture. Established in 1970, the NIEA focuses on advocacy, research, and capacity-building to advance educational opportunities for American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.

More than 5,000 attendees from across the globe, including REL Pacific staff, participated in the 45th annual convention from October 15–18, 2014. Held in Anchorage, Alaska, the convention offered 99 presentations covering subjects along eight strands: Early Childhood Education; Curriculum, Instruction, & Effective Teaching; Higher Education/College & Career Readiness; Public Schools and Urban Native Education; Culture & Language; STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics); Family and Community Engagement and Empowerment; and School Environment: Safety, Student Wellness, & Social Justice. Five presentations were delivered by Native Hawaiian members on subjects ranging from community learning exchange programs to reclaiming culture through photography.

Dr. Lisa Watkins-Victorino, Ka Pou Kihī Kāne (research director) for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) presented on *Promising Practices in*



Dr. Lisa Watkins-Victorino presenting a matrix for measuring success of Native Hawaiian education programs.

Measuring Outcomes of Culture-Based Education: Common Cultural Indicators. Dr. Watkins-Victorino commented, “As the representative for OHA on the Native Hawaiian Education Council (NHEC), I had the pleasure of co-presenting with Drs. Sylvia Hussey and Keiki Kawai‘ae‘a on the council’s ongoing work in developing a measurement matrix to better evaluate the efforts of indigenous education programs. The interest in relevant measurement for indigenous education programs was evident in that the session was very well attended. Participants were engaged and interested in learning more about the instruments associated with the components of the matrix.” The matrix lays out four focus-of-services impact domains and four locus-of-services impact domains to evaluate, measure, and understand the impacts and outcomes of programs funded under the Native Hawaiian Education Act, and is available at <http://nhec.org/resources/program-indicators>.

Two of this year’s three keynote speakers were Native Hawaiian. Dr. Walter Kahumoku III, Director of the Kauhale Kīpaipai (Educator Professional Development) department at Kamehameha Schools, delivered an engaging presentation on the history of Hawaiian education, the loss of Hawaiian identity, the four generational pathways for Hawaiian Education (‘Ike Ho‘okō, ‘Ike Na‘auao, ‘Ike Kuana ‘Ike, & ‘Ike, Maui Lāhui — language, intellection, applied achievement, and strengthening cultural identity), and visions for the future. Having previously served as an NIEA board member for four years, Dr. Kahumoku observed, “Having two of three keynotes presented by Hawaiians this year was surprising and significant. I believe that our Alaska Native and American Indian counterparts see the work we’re doing here in Hawai‘i as ground-breaking. We are considered leaders in native language immersion and bilingual education, culturally grounded approaches to standards education, and research that supports differentiating teaching and learning for native children. I feel honored and blessed to represent the Native Hawaiian community on such a national stage.”

National Indian Education Association Convention (continued) ³

The closing keynote speaker was Dr. Keiki Kawai'ae'a, director of Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani College of Hawaiian Language at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. Dr. Kawai'ae'a honored this year's theme of *Building Education Through the Generations* by sharing her family's story in the Hawaiian language immersion movement. As one of the founding families of the movement, the Kawai'ae'as have played a critical role in its development and implementation, and have been principal agents in the re-establishment of Hawaiian-medium education from pre-school to higher education. Dr. Kawai'ae'a was joined on stage by her daughter, Kananinohea Māka'imoku, one of the first graduates of the Pūnana Leo Hawaiian language immersion preschools, and her granddaughter, Hāweo'ulakaumaka Māka'imoku, who is currently enrolled in second grade at the Hawaiian language immersion school Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u.

“It was an honor to share our family story as the closing keynote for this year's theme. Along with many other families in Hawai'i who are committed to quality education through the mother tongue, we hope our journey resonated with our indigenous family nationwide and offered a glimmer of hope for things possible.”

- Dr. Keiki Kawai'ae'a

Also honored at the convention was the public charter school Hālau Kū Māna, the only known public school that requires six years of Hawaiian language for all students. Hālau Kū Māna is both a Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accredited school and a family-oriented halau, a place of learning built on a foundation of Hawaiian culture. Under the leadership of Mahina Paishon Duarte, the school saw a 100% graduation and college acceptance rate for two years in a row and was awarded the Most Improved Charter School Award in 2013.

To close the convention, the association bid a fond farewell to now-former president Pamela Agoyo, of the Cochiti/Kewa/Ohkay Owingeh Pueblos, and greeted the new president, Melvin Monette. Mr. Monette is a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians and will maintain his position as Director for Graduate Fellowships and Special Programs position at American Indian Graduate Center while serving as President of NIEA. During the induction ceremony, the Hawaii contingent chanted an oli (chant) and presented Mr. Monette with lei (strings of flowers), while Alaska Native and American Indian brothers and sisters presented him with blankets and regalia.

REL Pacific thanks convention participants for sharing their knowledge, wisdom, and successes, and congratulates Mr. Monette on his new position!



Former president Pamela Agoyo welcomes new president Melvin Monette.

⁴ Paddling Toward a Brighter Future: Locally Based Consultants Meet With Other REL Pacific Staff in Honolulu by Joanne OS Kelly

REL Pacific locally based consultants (LBCs) from across the Pacific region met during the week of November 10th to connect with colleagues, discuss Year 3 successes, and share Year 4 visions. LBCs work with their chief state school officers as members of the REL Pacific team to build, grow, and nurture the research alliance's capacity to effectively use data and research to improve student outcomes and school systems. Our LBCs build lasting relationships with education stakeholders including the departments or ministries of education, institutions of higher learning, and community leaders and members, meaningfully engaging them in projects and activities to advance knowledge, understanding, and effective practice in priority topic areas. As strategic thought partners, the LBCs inform and recommend ways to effectively work with stakeholders and advance the work in their entity.

“E lauhoe mai na wa'a; i ke ka, i ka hoe; i ka hoe, i ke ka; pae aku i ka 'aina. [Everybody paddle the canoes together; bail and paddle, paddle and bail, and the shore will be reached.]”

Visiting LBCs included Dr. Isebong Asang from Palau, Ms. Marlynn Halbert from the Federated States of Micronesia, Mr. Dominic Fanasog from Yap, Mr. Penny Jimmy from Pohnpei, Mr. Wilson Kephass from Kosrae, Mr. Paul Otoko from Chuuk, and Mr. Elia Savali from American Samoa. Dr. John Kofel, senior advisor to the REL, was also in attendance.

Drs. Kay Frunzi and Robin Wisniewski opened the two-day meeting with lively community-building activities and continued on to small-group discussions about problem-solving and action steps. To build capacity around the evolving role of the LBCs with research alliances, LBCs and other REL Pacific staff participated in workshop activities on forming collaborative teams, holding effective meetings, group dynamics, and addressing challenges. According to Dr. Frunzi, “The LBCs demonstrated great enthusiasm as they collaboratively engaged with the REL consultants in two-way dialogue and learning. The role of the LBCs



LBCs and REL Pacific Group: (1st row: left to right) Jean Isip, Marlynn Halbert-Sakios, April Wilson, Beth Gleason, Penny Jimmy, Isebong Asang, Robin Wisniewski, Rebeka Rainwater (2nd row: left to right) Johanna Carillo, Wendy Kekahio, Nitara Dandapani, Billie-Jo Marzen, Elia Savali, Paul Otoko, Wilson Kephass, Spencer Scanlan, Dominic Fanasog, John Kofel, Phillip Herman, Kay Frunzi

Paddling Toward a Brighter Future (continued) ⁵

is critical, as they are the eyes and ears on the ground to ensure REL work is always aligned to the needs of the communities we serve.”

To wrap up the meeting, REL Pacific staff facilitated three “World Café” roundtables, a process for engaging people in deep and meaningful conversations about substantive issues. Participants are asked to focus on what matters by contributing their thinking and experience, listening to understand, and making connections between ideas both verbally and by drawing on large sheets of paper on each of the three tables. LBCs brainstormed on the past, present, and future of REL Pacific research alliances: 2014 successes, turning challenges into opportunities, and dreams for 2015.

REL Pacific welcomed three new LBCs during this meeting, Dr. Billie-Jo Marzan of Guam, Mr. Elia Savali of American Samoa, and Mr. Paul Otoko of Chuuk. At the close of the meeting, REL Pacific Managing Consultant Jean Isip commented, “Our LBCs provide invaluable insight into the education successes and challenges in their entities, and are instrumental in the facilitation and growing of research alliances. The November meeting provided a great opportunity for the sharing of knowledge, the development of strategy, team building, and fellowship. We look forward to partnering with our LBC team for a productive 2015!”



Billie-Jo Marzan (left) and Marlynn Halbert (right) brainstorm ideas in the World Café.



Paul Otoko (right) and Elia Savali (left) engage in a small-group activity discussion.

REL Pacific Presents at the H-PEA Conference

On September 5th, REL Pacific participated in a poster session at the 2014 Hawaii-Pacific Evaluation Association (H-PEA) Conference. The poster was entitled “REL Pacific at McREL: Research into Practice,” and featured four examples of REL Pacific tools, trainings, or research studies in progress: the *Pacific Education Research Resource*, a study on *Benchmarking Education Management Information Systems in the Federated States of Micronesia*, *Data Analysis Training in the Republic of Palau*, and *Five Steps for Structuring Data-Informed Conversations and Action in Education*. Consistent with the theme of the conference, the poster session focused on REL Pacific resources and activities that either directly involved evaluation and assessment, or that can help guide monitoring and evaluation efforts. REL Pacific shared information on the scope and diversity of work in the region, and provided copies of the *Five Steps for Structuring Data-Informed Conversations and Action in Education* guide.

REL Pacific Governing Board Meets in Palau

From October 15–16, the REL Pacific Governing Board, REL Pacific staff members Nolan Malone and Rebeka Rainwater, and REL Pacific partner John Kofel met in Koror, Palau. On Day 1 of the meeting, Board members provided an overview of current community and education news from their entities, and REL Pacific staff shared new REL Pacific materials with the board and provided an overview of recent research alliance meetings and trainings. Together, the REL Pacific Governing Board members and REL Pacific staff reviewed the work completed in Year 3 (2014) of the REL Pacific contract, along with the proposed plan of work for Year 4 (2015) and discussed how it aligns with other work underway in each entity. During Day 2 of the meeting, Board members and staff discussed successes and challenges in each entity, and identified information that is informing policy and practice within their systems. Many thanks to the REL Pacific Governing Board for another productive meeting, and we look forward to seeing you again in March!



Present at the governing board meeting in Palau: Gardenia Aisek-Macayaon, Kalani English, Jon Fernandez, Marlynn Halbert-Sakios (representing Rufino Mauricio, FSM Department of Education), Kanchi Hosia (representing Hilda Heine, Republic of the Marshall Islands), Cindy Mori, Vincent Parren, Paulo Salavea (representing Salu Hunkin-Finau, American Samoa), Lugo Skilling (representing Lyndon Cornelius, FSM State of Kosrae), Sinton Soalablai, and Joseph Villazon, as well as REL Pacific staff members Nolan Malone, Rebeka Rainwater, and REL Pacific partner John Kofel. For a full list of governing board members, please visit: <http://relpacific.mcrel.org/rel-board-of-directors.html>.

Recently at the Pacific Center for Changing the Odds...

REL Pacific welcomed two new Governing Board members at the Pacific Center for Changing the Odds offices last month: Senator J. Kalani English and Jessica Worchel, Special Assistant to the Superintendent of the Hawaii Department of Education. Senator English and Ms. Worchel met with REL Pacific Director Dr. Nolan Malone and Managing Consultant Jean Isip to discuss their roles and responsibilities as board members. The Governing Board oversees the laboratory's program of work, providing oversight consistent with the REL Pacific at McREL International contract and Section 174(h) of the Education Sciences Reform Act (ESRA). Board members guide and direct the laboratory in satisfying all contract requirements; help determine how the laboratory will carry out its activities consistent with the authorizing legislation; plan joint activities across multiple regions; ensure the highest quality laboratory research, evaluation, technical assistance, products, and services; provide guidance on the laboratory's strategic plan; establish standards for the laboratory's effective governance and administration, including staff selection; assess the needs of the region; ensure that resources devoted to each entity reflect need for assistance, proportion of economically disadvantaged students, cost of service delivery, and any special initiatives being undertaken in the entity; and increase collaboration and resource sharing, among other activities and responsibilities.



Welcoming two new board members in Honolulu. From left to right: Nolan Malone, Jessica Worchel, Kalani English, Jean Isip.

2014 Highlighted Tools and Resources

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As we move into 2015, here's a quick look back at some 2014 highlights.

In 2014, our work focused on the following priority areas:

- **Strengthening Teacher Effectiveness:** a focus on increasing teachers' qualifications, determining characteristics of effective teachers, and identifying the best classroom practices to impact student outcomes;
- **Engaging Families and Communities in Education:** a focus on connecting schools, families, and communities to work together to support learning;
- **Ensuring Career and College Readiness:** a focus on preparing students to enter the workforce or to pursue college or technical education upon exiting Pacific high schools; and
- **Optimizing Data Systems:** a focus on developing, maintaining, and use using data systems effectively and efficiently.

Throughout 2014, REL Pacific developed several tools and resources to help guide work within these overarching areas:

- The *Education Logic Model (ELM)* and *Program Outcomes, Measures, and Targets (POMT)* applications, an innovative computer-based, interactive set of two modules designed to guide users through creating a logic model for planning and evaluating programs and help them monitor their programs (available at <http://relpacific.mcrel.org/PERR.html>);
- A series of "quick reference guides" on logic models (available at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL_2014007.pdf, http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL_2014011.pdf, http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL_2014025.pdf, and http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL_2014034.pdf);
- A review of research on student nonenrollment and chronic absenteeism (available at <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?projectID=2458>);
- A series of infographics detailing regional demographics, research alliances and priority areas, and how to optimize data systems (available at <http://relpacific.mcrel.org/reports-publications.html>); and
- Multiple informational videos and recorded webinars, including Bridging Research Policy, and Practice (Bridge) events (available at <http://relpacific.mcrel.org/resources/videos>).



Research Alliances

At REL Pacific, we structure our work around “research alliances,” which bring together key stakeholders to work collaboratively to address problems and questions of high priority and relevance to Pacific education. Working together with REL Pacific staff, alliance members identify problems and questions to be answered through research and evaluation, participate in the development of longitudinal data systems, apply research and evaluation study findings to inform decision making and practices, and use the skills and knowledge they’ve gained to help others do the same. For the upcoming year, we’ve adjusted the research alliances to provide more entity-specific support and to expand their membership. One alliance, the Hawai’i Partnership for Educational Research Consortium (HPERC), transitioned out of the alliance structure as they reconsider their charter; however, REL Pacific still has multiple ongoing projects underway in Hawai’i.

REL Pacific Research Alliance	Current Priority Topic Areas
American Samoa Alliance for College and Career Readiness	Ensuring College and Career Readiness
CNMI Alliance for College and Career Readiness	Ensuring College and Career Readiness
FSM Research Alliance in Chuuk	Strengthening Teacher Effectiveness and Optimizing Data Systems
FSM Research Alliance in Kosrae	Strengthening Teacher Effectiveness and Optimizing Data Systems
FSM Research Alliance in Pohnpei	Strengthening Teacher Effectiveness and Optimizing Data Systems
FSM Research Alliance in Yap	Strengthening Teacher Effectiveness and Optimizing Data Systems
Guam Alliance for Family and Community Engagement in Education	Engaging Families and Communities in Education
Marshall Islands Research Alliance	Strengthening Teacher Effectiveness and Optimizing Data Systems
Palau Research Alliance	Strengthening Teacher Effectiveness and Optimizing Data Systems

Technical Support Projects

Technical support projects are intended to advance the understanding of data and how it can serve to inform decision making, connect research to practice, and support the specific interests of each individual research alliance. In 2015, REL Pacific plans to provide trainings and toolkits to each alliance on effectively using data and research findings within their identified priority areas. In addition, REL Pacific staff will continue to disseminate and train stakeholders to use REL Pacific's logic model and program monitoring tools; complete data inventories (which identify and categorize available data) on college data throughout the region; and disseminate research reviews on teacher certification and absenteeism.

Research Studies

By working closely with research alliances and analyzing needs across the region, REL Pacific has developed a list of research and evaluation studies aligned with the high-priority topic areas and designed to address the specific needs of research alliance members.

The following REL Pacific studies and reports are expected to be published in 2015:

- *College Readiness Among High School Completers in American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands*
- *Enrollment, Demographic, and Program Participation Characteristics of Guam's Freely Associated State (FAS) Micronesian Students*
- *Patterns and Results of the Practice Teacher Certification Examination in the Republic of Palau*
- *The State of Chuuk: Benchmarking Education Management Information Systems in the Federated States of Micronesia*
- *The State of Kosrae: Benchmarking Education Management Information Systems in the Federated States of Micronesia*
- *The State of Pohnpei: Benchmarking Education Management Information Systems in the Federated States of Micronesia*
- *The State of Yap: Benchmarking Education Management Information Systems in the Federated States of Micronesia*

Sharing Information Across the Region

Throughout the year, REL Pacific holds Bridging Research, Policy, and Practice (Bridge) events, develops reports and resources, and attends and presents at conferences across the region to keep our stakeholders informed. In 2015, REL Pacific intends to conduct eight Bridge events across the region, on topics as diverse as family and community engagement, culturally based education, and the results of our research studies. We hope to see many of you at the Pacific Education Conference, the Micronesian Teachers' Education Conference, and other conferences across the region in 2015. In the meantime, we look forward to sharing news and resources with you through newsletters, e-blasts, and face-to-face contacts.

To ask for help with research or technical assistance, or to share your stories or submit additional requests, call us at 808.664.8175 or email relpacific@mcrel.org



In each newsletter, we like to introduce you to some of our staff members. In this volume, we'd like you to meet Dr. Ceri Dean, Ms. Fatima Frank, and Ms. Rebeka Rainwater.



Dr. Ceri B. Dean is a senior fellow at McREL International and the newly appointed interim director of the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Pacific. In her 22 years at McREL, she has been responsible for developing new business, programs, products, and services; has served as principal investigator on funded projects; has provided professional development, technical assistance, and consultation services on a range of topics related to system improvement; has developed and managed partnerships and client relationships; and has participated in strategy development for the organization. She has worked extensively across the Pacific region under the REL Pacific contract. She is a former high school mathematics teacher and holds a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Connecticut at Storrs and an M.S. in Atmospheric Science from Colorado State University.



Fatima Frank, research specialist, contributes to the development and delivery of technical assistance services as well as the research and evaluation studies of educational programs. As a research specialist, she engages in expedient research, evaluation, and data analysis to inform educators on best practices to change the odds for student success. She has expertise in implementing impact evaluations, survey design, field research, and data analysis and reporting. Fatima holds a B.A. in International Studies from Virginia Tech and an M.A. in Development Economics from the University of California, San Diego. When not working, Fatima enjoys being outside, exploring cultural events, and running.



Rebeka Rainwater, executive assistant, performs a wide range of administrative duties for the vice president of our Pacific Center at McREL's Pacific Center for Changing the Odds. Prior to joining McREL, Rebeka was the office manager for Hawaii's health insurance marketplace created under the Patient Protection and Affordable Health Care Act. She has also served in various capacities at the Research Corporation at the University of Hawai'i and the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center at the University of Texas in Houston. She began her career teaching K-3rd grade at a private school in Austin, Texas. Rebeka holds a B.A. from the University of Texas at Austin, where she studied business, liberal arts, and fine art.

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*McREL's Pacific Center
for Changing the Odds*

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