

Levers for Change

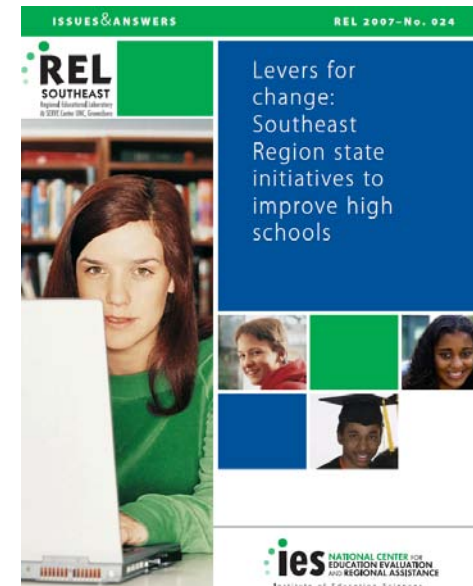
Southeastern State Initiatives to Improve High Schools

The Challenge

- High schools are now expected to graduate everyone prepared for college and work
- But, we currently have...
 - Low graduation rates
 - Low achievement
 - A lack of preparedness for work and college

In this report, you will find...

- Recent, state-level, high school improvement initiatives in the six REL-SE states and critical themes that cut across states' efforts
- A sample of the research underlying these strategies
- A systematic approach that will allow states and districts to examine the use of the initiatives described in the report



SERVE is helping schools address challenges

- Part of the work of the Regional Education Laboratory for the Southeast, located at SERVE Center
- Funded by the Institute of Education Sciences at the U.S. Department of Education



Methodology

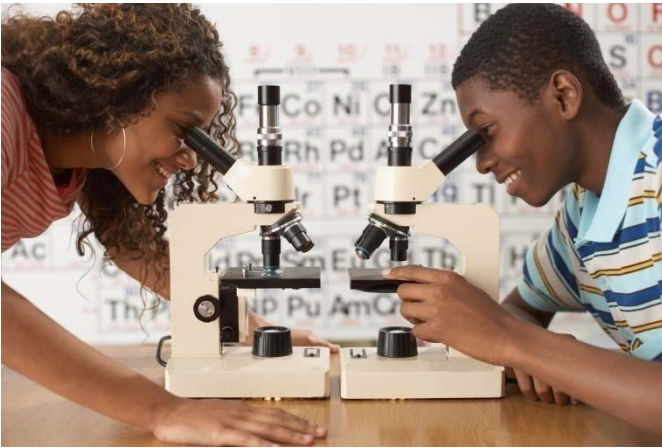
- Collected information from state contacts and from state websites using protocols
- Created state profiles
- Analyzed profiles to identify cross-cutting themes (“levers for change”)
- Placed state activities in context of a decision-making process
- Identified sample research for activities under each lever

Six “Levers for Change”

1. *Standards and assessments*
2. *Course requirements*
3. *Student support and access to courses*
4. *Model schools and practices*
5. *Local capacity-building*
6. *Partnerships and public involvement*

Standards and Assessments

States are working to align standards and assessments with expectations for postsecondary education and with 21st century skills.



State Activities

- Align standards with postsecondary workforce expectations (AL, GA, MS, and NC)
- Offer a “Ready-to-Work” certification program (FL)

Course Requirements



States are revising their graduation requirements to include courses required for college and work readiness

State Activities

- Increase rigor of course requirements (AL, MS, NC)
- Establish specific course requirements for middle and high school (FL)
- Require high school students to select a major (FL, SC) or possibly a career pathway (MS)

Student Support and Access to Courses

States are working to increase students' access to both the support and courses they need (both remedial and advanced).



State Activities

- Support Virtual High Schools (AL, GA, FL, MS, NC, SC)
- Expand access to AP courses (AL, GA)
- Mandate intensive instruction in math and literacy for middle and high school students performing at the lowest levels (FL)

Model Schools and Practices

States are supporting efforts on a continuum from creating entirely new model schools to redesigning existing schools to implementing innovative practices.



State Activities

- Support implementation of specific strategies in schools (MS)
- Support redesigned high schools to serve as models (NC, FL)
- Fund replication of model programs (FL)
- Support implementation of specific models including Early College High Schools (NC), High Schools That Work (SC)

Local Capacity-Building

- States are building local capacity by providing direct professional development or providing coaches or technical assistance teams onsite at schools.
- Provide professional development targeted at a content area, such as math and science (AL)
- Provide coaches to work with schools, e.g. graduation coaches (GA) or leadership facilitators for low-performing high schools (NC)
- Develop Regional Education Centers (SC)
- Provide technical assistance to low-performing high schools (AL, FL, GA, MS, NC, SC)



Partnerships and Public Involvement

States are establishing partnerships to support high school reform. State leaders are using their visibility to increase the attention paid to high schools.



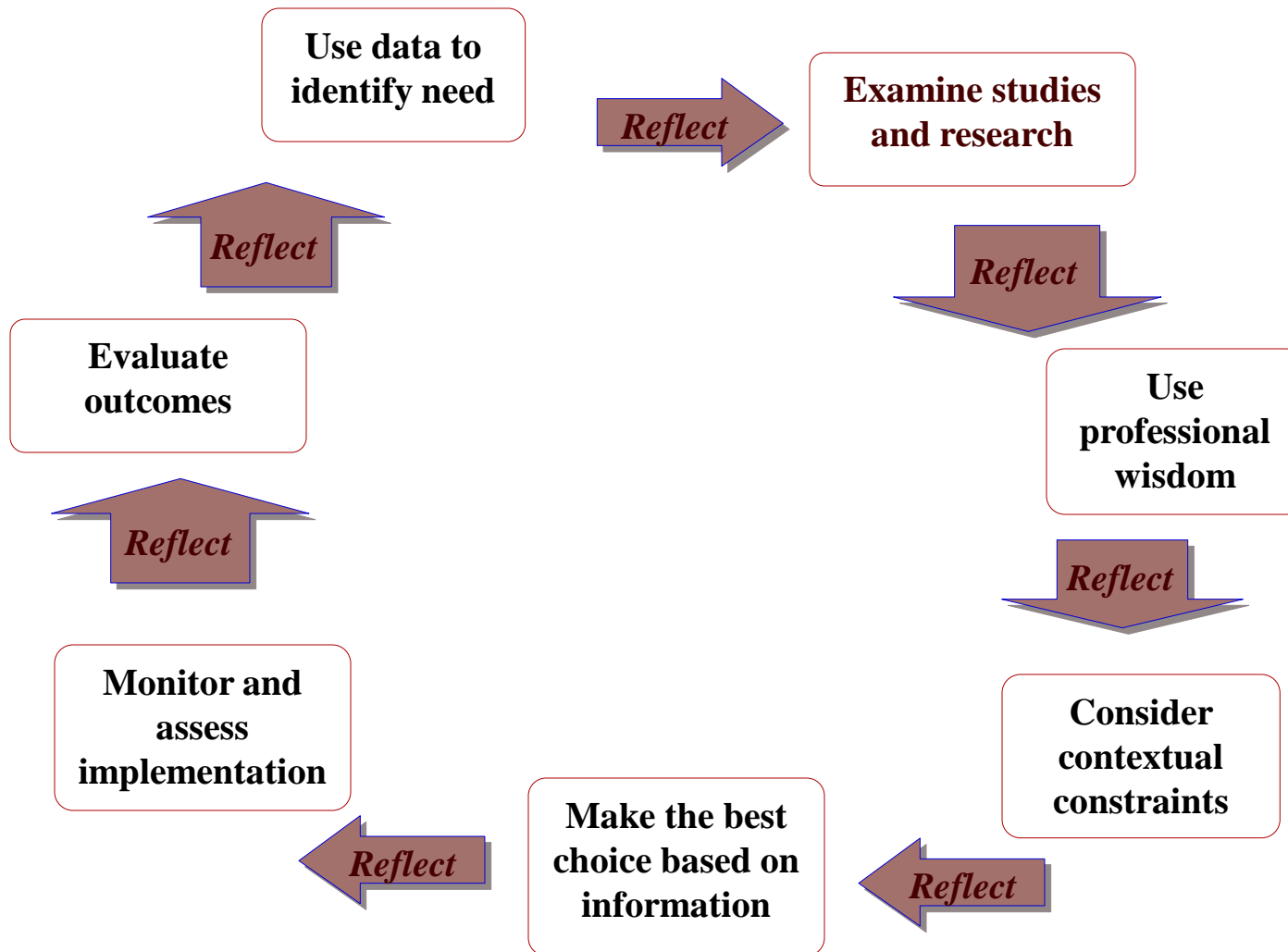
State Activities

- Give presentations around the state (MS)
- Engage in a comprehensive advocacy initiative (NC)
- Use partnerships with other agencies to leverage change (AL, FL, GA, MS, NC, SC)

Examining the Levers

- Just because someone does something, does that make it good?
- We wanted to encourage people to think critically about initiatives undertaken by others.
- To do this, we:
 - Placed these levers in the context of the EBDM Cycle
 - Provided samples of research

EBDM Cycle



Ways this report can help you...

- It can give you ideas of strategies to use to address the challenges of high school.
- It includes a sample of the research underlying many of these strategies
- It provides tools and ideas for how to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of your choices

For more information

A copy of the report:

<http://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=REL2007024>

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