

## ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY

Our mission is to foster empowered, information-rich educational systems by finding and translating the best current knowledge, generating new knowledge, and partnering with stakeholders to identify and apply best evidence to practice. The staff at the SERVE Center has extensive experience in providing high-quality information and services to meet educational stakeholders' needs. We have developed and widely disseminated numerous high-quality publications and products, provided information or assistance to over 500 districts in the Southeast, and have functioned as a trusted source of information and connection to the larger world of research.

States and districts regularly turn to SERVE for assistance in finding research to: guide decision making, use data more effectively, and conduct evaluations of programs. SERVE also provides customized evaluation and technical assistance services through contracts with states, districts, schools, and other clients. These deep relationships with states and districts were built over SERVE's long and productive history. In all its work, SERVE operates as an objective information provider with a commitment to honest, transparent, and easy to understand presentations of the best current knowledge.

### **EXPERIENCE AS A REGIONAL AND NATIONAL SERVICE PROVIDER.**

*Since its inception in 1990 SERVE has successfully managed a portfolio of over \$200 million including 14 major federally funded awards.*

### **Regional Focus**

We have operated the **Regional Educational Laboratory for the Southeast (REL-SE)** since 1990. The Regional Educational Laboratory Program consists of a network of 10 laboratories, which serve the educational needs of a designated region. The REL-SE at SERVE serves the educational needs of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

The REL-SE is funded by the Institute of Education Sciences at the U.S. Department of Education (USED). Highlights of the current REL-SE five-year, \$37 million contract are listed below:

Connected nearly 11,000 practitioners, administrators, and policymakers through reports, briefs, [IES-sponsored Bridge Events](#), and conference presentations to the most expert researchers and the best research available on educational issues like dropout prevention and adolescent literacy.

Disseminated 10,493 copies of [REL-SE Issues and Answers \(I&A\) reports](#), which inform educators about topics important to the region such as African-American student achievement and high school improvement.



Operated an [Evidence-Based Education \(EBE\) request desk](#) and prepared over 550 customized, written responses to educator questions, many of which have been broadly disseminated to other stakeholders.

In addition to frequent outreach, production and dissemination of reports, and responding to educator questions, the REL-SE has coordinated two IES-approved large-scale randomized controlled trials (RCTs) evaluating education interventions in [Alabama](#) and [Mississippi](#). These RCTs are described below.

*The Effectiveness of a Program to Accelerate Vocabulary Development in Kindergarten (Vocab)—Mississippi.* The Mississippi K-PAVE study is an evaluation of the impact of *Kindergarten PAVEd for Success* (K-PAVE), an intervention designed to promote kindergarten students' vocabulary development through frequent, interactive book reading, explicit vocabulary instruction, and teacher-child conversations built around enhanced use of vocabulary. The study was conducted in 35 school districts in and around the Mississippi Delta region.

*The Effectiveness of the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) —Alabama.* The AMSTI study is an experimental study of a state initiative to improve student achievement in mathematics and science through the provision of comprehensive professional development, in-school coaching and supports, and distribution of technology and instructional materials. The study was conducted using data from 82 Alabama schools.

## ***National in Scope***

At the national level, SERVE has successfully operated the ***National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)*** since 1998 with funding from USED.

The NCHE provides research, resources, and information—enabling communities to address the educational needs of children experiencing homelessness. NCHE serves as a clearinghouse of information for people seeking to remove or overcome educational barriers and for those seeking to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for children and youth experiencing homelessness. NCHE also supports educators and service providers by producing training and awareness materials and by providing training at regional and national conferences and events.

NCHE uses state-of-the-art technology for web communication and online professional development and for supporting state coordinators for homeless education, local program coordinators, educators, parents, and advocates in all 50 states and in 15,000 school districts. Each month, NCHE documents over 16,000 visits to its website, 600 participants in webinars, and 300 calls to its toll-free helpline. NCHE disseminates over 100,000 [homeless awareness posters](#) upon request each year.



## **TAILOR-MADE, FORWARD-LOOKING, UNIFYING...TEAMWORK.**

*While national in scope, SERVE remains an agile and focused service provider with vision, a passion for outreach, and matchless personnel.*

### ***Program Evaluations***

SERVE has an extensive history of conducting high-quality evaluations to address the informational needs of individual districts and states. Examples of such SERVE work include evaluations of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Magnet Program in North Carolina, the Guilford County Schools teacher incentive program (Mission Possible), and the USED-funded Bridges to Early Learning Project in South Carolina. Recently, SERVE began collaborating with the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at North Carolina State University and with SAS Institute on several technology in education evaluations.

### ***Research to Advance Knowledge***

In addition to evaluation contracts, SERVE has successfully competed for a number of grant awards to conduct research on high school reform (e.g., a \$2.8 million research study on the impact of Early College High Schools). In the past, SERVE has conducted research under grant awards from the National Science Foundation and from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

### ***Bridging Research to Practice***

SERVE has a long history of developing and disseminating publications and providing other training and technical assistance services to bring research to practitioners as they consider strategies for improvement. See the [publications list](#) for examples of the numerous products and topics covered.

### ***Staffing***

SERVE actively promotes workplace diversity and has a [staff](#) of 55 employees; four of whom are permanently located within state departments of education. Eighty percent of professional employees hold graduate degrees. Fifty percent of the staff have been with SERVE for five years or more, indicating the commitment of SERVE staff to the work of supporting school improvement. SERVE's main office is on the Research Campus of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG).