

# Regional SIG Conference Explores "Revamped" Turnaround Strategies

More than 250 participants from state education agencies, local education agencies, and schools implementing School Improvement Grants (SIGs) attended the *Leading Successful School Turnarounds: Learning from Research and Practice* conference, April 4th and 5th in Los Angeles. Participants, representing nine states, heard from keynote speakers Lauren Morando Rhim, a consultant to the Center on Innovation and Improvement, who spoke on "Leveraging SIG Dollars to Drive Dramatic Improvement: Lessons Emerging from the Field," and Debra Pickering, Senior Scholar at the Marzano Research Laboratory, who discussed "Effective Teaching/Effective Learning."

In her remarks on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education, Thelma Melendez de Santa Ana, Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, noted that: "In the past, when given an option to implement major reforms, the vast majority of districts and schools chose 'other,' or 'none of the above.' And among those schools that did take some hesitant steps down the road toward 'improvement' or 'restructuring,' many never completed the journey. With the newly revamped SIG program, we're making it clear that it's time for bold reforms, not timid tinkering. Our children can't wait."

One of four such events scheduled during April and May in Western, Eastern, Midwest, and Central regions of the country, the conference program was planned and implemented by the California, Northwest, Pacific, and Southwest Comprehensive Centers in collaboration with the five national content centers and the U.S. Department of Education.

In addition to breakout sessions addressing state, local, and classroom-level school turnaround issues, state department of education staff, rural and urban district staff, school administrators, and other groups met in role-alike groups to address common challenges and strategies. State team meetings gave participants the opportunity for cross-role networking on turnaround issues.

For further information on the SIG Regional Conferences, go to: <http://www.ed.gov/oese-news/sig-regional-conferences-%E2%80%93-save-date>

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