RC6 Support for the NCDPI

The Region 6 Comprehensive Center (RC6) is operated by the SERVE Center at UNC Greensboro and provides technical assistance to Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Assistance is tailored to the needs of the individual states while addressing the priorities of the U.S. Department of Education. Currently, the RC6 has the following four projects underway in support of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI):

Project 1	Project 2	Project 3	Project 4
Building SEA Capacity to Support CSI Principals and Coaches in Implementing Innovative Partnership Grants (2020-present)	Support for Alternative Learning Programs and Schools (2021-present)	Building Engineers in K-5 Classrooms (2021-present)	Improving Early Childhood Learning Experiences (2021-present)

Project 1: Building SEA Capacity to Support CSI Principals and Coaches in Implementing Innovative Partnership Grants

This project supports the NCDPI leaders providing support to the low-performing schools receiving Innovative Partnership Grants (IPG). Starting in 2020, the RC6 provided strategic support to IPG school coaches, principals, and district liaisons at 22 IPG-funded CSI schools. During the 2021-22 school year, a new cohort of 13 NC IPG-funded schools began implementing IPG grants and joined the 22 schools already receiving RC6-facilitated support. In 2022-23, the RC6 continues its support for developing a Community of Practice (CoP) for the 35 IPG-funded schools. The RC6 support is aimed at building a common knowledge base across the IPG school coaches in the 35 CSI schools (e.g., relative to strategic planning and use of evidence-based practices). Support also includes developing and modeling the use of data dashboards for various SEA, LEA, and school purposes in managing the IPG grants. Over the last 3 years, the RC6 facilitated 16 Problem of Practice sessions (8 with IPG school principals and 8 with IPG school coaches). Support to NCDPI was also provided in planning and conducting 6 IPG convenings.

Project 2: Support for Alternative Learning Programs and Schools

This RC6 project supports Alternative Learning Programs and Schools (ALPS) in NC by assisting the NCDPI in structuring a network that allows ALPS administrators and teachers to share experiences with innovative and evidence-based strategies for the alternative learning setting. The project helps NCDPI and LEAs by 1) supporting the creation of a statewide network for Alternative Learning Program leaders to collaborate and share research-based strategies; 2) providing information on a range of strategies/solutions for improving student engagement and outcomes (e.g., competency-based education); and c) using data and indicators to identify areas of strength and potential growth. The convening took several forms (professional development, role-alike meetings, virtual Community of Practice [CoP] meetings and virtual conferences). The RC6 facilitated eight CoP sessions on the discussion of evidence-based strategies, provided five professional development sessions, and supported a virtual conference for 69 ALPS leaders. The RC6 also supported NCDPI in conducting an end-of-school-year analysis using survey and other data from ALPS principals to obtain their feedback on challenges and future professional development needs (for both school leaders and teachers).

Project 3: Building Engineers in K-5 Classrooms

High-quality Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education is necessary in elementary schools in order for students of all backgrounds to have interest in and access and opportunity to pursue STEM career pathways as they move through their secondary school education and beyond. This project responds to this need for access by supporting the development of individualized LEA-driven implementation plans to improve elementary STEM education through the utilization of the engineering design process within regular classroom instruction. In 2022, the RC6 recruited 16 LEAs (two cohorts of 8) and supported them in developing a 2-year implementation plan for their LEAs. In order to generate interest statewide in this approach to high-quality STEM instruction at the elementary level, the project is also identifying and meeting with regional "STEM Champions" to assist NCDPI in expanding statewide implementation efforts. In addition, the project is developing collaborative support structures for elementary STEM Teachers within North Carolina to share resources and best practices. Finally, the project has held its first annual "Building Engineers in K-5 Classrooms" statewide conference to showcase the work of the two cohorts and others. See Building Engineers website.

Project 4: Improving Early Childhood Learning Experiences in North Carolina

The RC6 assembled a North Carolina team of early childhood experts and practitioners at the state, local, and school level who determined the need for a statewide collaborative in the early childhood area because of the challenge to ensure policies, practices, and strategies for the youngest learners align with research about what is essential to their successful development and learning. In 2022, the RC6 formed the state collaborative with 13 early learning leaders (Cohort 1) and then added a second cohort, including 22 additional early learning leaders. The RC6 provided initial support as these cohorts participated in a P-3 Leadership Certificate program (through the National P-3 Center at the University of Colorado Denver) and then provided additional support as the cohort members developed next steps for their local communities. The RC6 facilitates monthly meetings whereby the two cohorts share thoughts and strategies. The RC6 also develops documents that encourage the continuous improvement of policies and strategies in Early Childhood. Documents developed to-date include one white paper (See Children Come First: Ensuring School Policies, Practices, and Strategies Lead to Positive 3rd Grade Outcomes) and four accompanying briefs on the RC6 website.